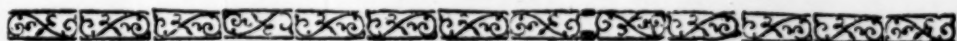




THE SECOND TOME.



CONTEMPLATIONS
V.PON THE HISTORIE
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The first Volume.

IN THREE BOOKES.

BY IOS. HALL, D. of Diuinitie, and Deane
of VVORCESTER.



Imprinted at *London* in the yeare 1628.



T O M Y M V C H

H O N O V R E D, A N D

R I G H T V V O R S H I P F V L L

h a s y e l d m E R I E N D, S I R

h a s y e l d m **Henrie Yelucerton**

K N I G H T, A T T V R N E Y

G E N E R A L L T O H I S

h a s y e l d m

M a i e s t i e.

R I G H T W O R S H I P F V L L,



*I*s not out of any satietie, that I change from the old Testament to the new; These two, as they are the Brests of the Church, so they yeeld Milke equally wholsome, equally pleasant vnto able Nurselings. Herein I thought good to haue respect vnto my Reader, in whose strength there may be difference. That other brest perhaps, doth not let downe this nourishing liquor, so freely, so easily: Euen so small a variety refresheth a weake Infant; Neither will there perhaps want some palates, which will finde a more quick & pleasing relish in this fresher substance: these I thought good to please with a taste, ere they come to sate themselves with a full Meale of this diuine nourishment; in emulation of the good Scribe, that

A 3

brings

brings forth both olde and new. If it please God to inable my
life and opportunities, I hope at last, to present this Church with
the last service of the Historie of either Page: wherein my Joy,
and my Crowne shall bee the edification of many. In the meane
time, I dedicate this part vnto your Name, whom I haue so
much cause to obserue, and honour. The blessing of that God
(whose Church you haue euermade your chiefe Client) bee still
vpon your head, and that honourable Societie which reioyces in
so worthy a Leader. To it, and your selfe, I shall be euer (as I
haue cause)

Humbly and

vnfainedly deuoted

IO: HALL.



Contemplations.

THE FIRST BOOKE.

The Angell and Zacharie.



When things are at worst, then God beginnes a change: The state of the Iewish Church was extremely corrupted, immediately before the newes of the Gospell; yet, as bad as it was, not onely the Priesthood, but the courses of attendance continued, euen from *Dauids* time till Christs: It is a desperately depraued condition of a Church, where no good orders are left: Iudea passed many troubles, many alterations, yet this orderly combination endured about an eleuen hundred yeares: A settled good will not easily be defeated, but in the change of persons will remayne vchanged, and if it be forced to giue way, leaues memorable footsteps behinde it: If *Dauid* fore-saw the perpetuation of this holy Ordinance, how much did he reioyce in the knowledge of it? who would not bee glad to doe good, on condition, that it may so long out-live him?

The successiue turnes of the Legall ministracion held on in a Line neuer interrupted: Euen in a forlorne and miserable Church, there may bee a personall succession: How little were the Iewes better for this, when they had lost the *Vrim* and *Thummim*, sinceritie of Doctrine and Manners? This stayed with them euen whiles they and their Sonnes crucified Christ; What is more ordinary, than wicked Sonnes of holy Parents? It is the succession of Truth and Holinesse, that makes or institutes a Church, what euer become of the persons: Neuer times were so barren, as not to yeeld some good: The greatest dearth affords some few good Eares to the Gleaners: Christ would not haue come into the World, but hee would haue some faithfull to entertayne him: Hee, that had the disposing of all times and men, would cast some holy ones into his owne times: There had bin no equalitie, that all should either ouer-run, or follow him, and none attend him. *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* are iust, both of *Aarons* blood, and *Iohn Baptist* of theirs; whence should an holy Seede spring, if not of the Loynes of *Leui*? It is not in the power of Parents to traduce Holinesse to their Children: It is the blessing of God, that seoffes them in the vertues of their Parents, as they seoffe them in their sinnes: There is no certaintie, but there is likelihood, of an holy Generation, when the Parents are such: *Elizabeth* was iust, as well as *Zachary*, that the fore-runner of a Sauour might bee holy on both sides: If the stocke and the griffe bee not both good, there is much danger of the fruit: It is an happy match, when the Husband and the Wife are one, not only in themselves, but in God, not more in flesh, than in the spirit: Grace makes no difference

of sexes, rather the weaker carries away the more honour, because it hath had lesse helps: It is easie to obserue, that the New Testament affordeth more store of good women, than the old: *Elizabeth* led the ring of this mercy, whose barrenesse ended in a miraculous fruit both of her body, and of her time.

This religious paire made no lesse progresse in vertue, than in age, & yet their vertue could not make their best age fruitfull: *Elizabeth* was barren. A iust soule and a barren wombe may wel agree together: Amongst the Iewes barrenesse was not a defect only, but a reproach, yet while this good woman was fruitfull of holy obedience, she was barren of children: as *Iohn*, which was miraculously conceived by man, was a fit forerunner of him, that was conceived by the Holy Ghost, so a barren Matron was meet to make way for a Virgin.

None, but a sonne of *Aaron*, might offer incense to God in the Temple; and not euery sonne of *Aaron*, and not any one at all seasons: God is a God of order, and hates confusion no lesse than irreligion: Albeit he hath not so straitned himselfe vnder the Gospell, as to tie his seruice to persons, or places, yet his choice is now no lesse curious, because it is more large: Hee allowes none, but the authorised; Hee authoriseth none but the worthy. The Incense doth euery smell of the hand, that offers it; I doubt not but that perfume was sweeter, which ascended vp from the hand of a iust *Zacharie*: The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to God: There were courses of ministration in the legall seruices: God neuer purposed to burthen any of his creatures with deuotion: How vaine is the ambition of any soule, that would loade it selfe with the vniuersall charge of all men? How thanklesse is their labour, that doe wilfully overspend themselves in their ordinarie vocations? As *Zacharie* had a course in Gods house, so hee carefully obserued it; The fauour of these respites doubled his diligence: The more high and sacred our calling is, the more dangerous is neglect: It is our honour, that wee may be allowed to wait vpon the God of heauen in these immediate seruices: Woe be to vs, if wee slacken those duties, wherein God honours vs more, than we can honour him,

Many sonns of *Aaron*, yea of the same familie, serued at once in the Temple, according to the varietie of employments: To auoid all difference, they agreed by lot to assigne themselves to the seuerall offices of each day; The lot of this day called *Zacharie* to offer Incense in the outer Temple: I doe not finde any prescription they had from God of this particular manner of designement: Matters of good order in holy affaires may be ruled by the wise institution of men according to reason and expedience.

It fell out well, that *Zacharie* was chosen by lot to this ministration, that Gods immediate hand might be seene in all the passages, that concerned his great Prophet, that as the person, so the occasion might be of Gods owne choosing: In lots and their seeming casuall disposition, God can giue a reason, though we can giue none: Morning and Euening, twise a day their Law called them to offer Incense to God, that both parts of the day might be consecrate to the maker of time: The outer Temple was the figure of the whole Church vpon earth, like as the holy of holiest represented heauen: Nothing can better resemble our faithfull prayers, than sweet perfume: These, God looks, that wee should (all his Church ouer) send vp vnto him Morning and Euening: The eleuations of our hearts should be perpetuall, but if twise in the day we doe not present God with our solemn inuocations, we make the Gospell lesse officious, than the Law.

That the resemblance of prayers and incense might be apparent, whiles the Priest sends vp his incense within the Temple, the people must send vp their prayers without: Their breath and that incense, though remote in the first rising, meet ere they went vp to heauen: The people might no more goe into the Holy place to offer vp the incense of prayers vnto God, than *Zacharie* might goe into the Holy of holies: Whiles the partition wall stood betwixt Iewes and Gentiles, there were also partitions betwixt the Iewes, and themselves: Now every man is a Priest vnto God;

Euery

Euery man (since the veile was rent) prayes within the Temple: What are we the better for our greater freedome of adcesse to God vnder the Gospell, if wee doe not make vse of our priuiledge?

Whiles they were praying to God, hee sees an Angell of G O D; as *Gideons* Angell went vp in the smoke of the sacrifice, so did *Zacharies* Angell (as it were) come downe in the fragrant smoake of his incense: It was euer great newes to see an Angell of God, but now more; because God had long with-drawne from them all the meanes of his supernaturall reuelations: As this wicked people were strangers to their God in their conuerfation, so was God growne a stranger to them in his apparitions; yet now that the season of the Gospell approached, he visited them with his Angels, before he visited them by his Sonne: He sends his Angell to men in the forme of man, before hee sends his Sonne to take humane forme: The presence of Angels is no noueltie, but their apparition; they are alwayes with vs, but rarely seene, that wee may awfully respect their messages, when they are seene; In the meane time our faith may see them, though our senses doe not; their assumed shapes doe not make them more present, but visible.

There is an order in that heauenly Hierarchie, though we know it not: This Angell, that appeared to *Zacharie*, was not with him in the ordinarie course of his attendances, but was purposely sent from God with this message: Why was an Angell sent? and why this Angell? It had beene easie for him to haue raised vp the propheticall spirit of some *Simeon* to this prediction; the same Holy Ghost, which reuealed to that iust man, that he should not see death, ere hee had seene the Messias, might haue as easily reuealed vnto him the birth of the fore-runner of Christ, and by him to *Zacharie*: But God would haue this voyce, which should goe before his Sonne, come with a noise: He would haue it appeare to the world, that the harbinger of the Messias should be conceived by the maruellous power of that God, whose comming hee proclaimed: It was fit the first Herald of the Gospell begin in wonder: The same Angell, that came to the blessed Virgin with the newes of Christs conception, came to *Zacharie* with the newes of *Iohns*, for the honour of him, that was the greatest of them which were borne of women, and for his better resemblance to him, which was the seede of the woman: Both had the Gospell for their errand, one as the messenger of it, the other as the Author; Both are foretold by the same mouth.

When could it bee more fit for the Angell to appeare vnto *Zacharie*, then when prayers and incense were offered by him? Where could hee more fitly appeare, then in the Temple? In what part of the Temple more fitly, then at the Altar of Incense? and whereabouts rather, then on the right side of the Altar? Those glorious spirits as they are alwayes with vs, so most in our deuotions, and as in all places, so most of all in Gods house: They reioyce to be with vs, whiles we are with God, as contrarily they turne their faces from vs, when we goe about our sinnes.

Hee that had wont to liue, and serue in the presence of the master, was now astonished at the presence of the seruant; so much difference there is betwixt our faith, and our senses, that the apprehension of the presence of the God of spirits by faith goes downe sweetely with vs, whereas the sensible apprehension of an Angell dismayes vs: Holy *Zacharie*, that had wont to liue by faith, thought hee should dye, when his sense began to be set on worke: It was the weakenesse of him, that serued at the Altar without horror, to be daunted with the face of his fellow seruant: In vaine doe wee looke for such Ministers of G O D, as are without infirmities, when iust *Zacharie* was troubled in his deuotions with that wherewith hee should haue beene comforted: It was partly the suddenesse, and partly the glory of the apparition, that affrighted him: The good Angell was both apprehensiuely and compassionate of *Zacharies* weakenesse, and presently encourages him with a cheerefull exhortation; (*Fear not ZACHARIAS.*) The blessed spirits, though they doe not often vocally expresse it, doe pittie our humane frailties, and secretly suggest comfort vnto vs, when

When we perceiue it not : Good and euill Angels, as they are contrary in estate, so also in disposition : The good desire to take away feare, the euill to bring it : It is a fruit of that deadly enmity, which is betwixt Satan and vs, that hee would, if hee might kill vs with terrour; whereas the good spirits affecting our reliefe and happinesse, take no pleasure in terrifying vs, but labour altogether for our tranquillitie and cheerefulness.

There was not more feare in the face, then comfort in the speech; *Thy prayer is heard*: No Angell could haue told him better newes; Our desires are vttered in our praier: What can we wish but to haue what we would? Many good suites had *Zacharie* made, and amongst the rest for a sonne: Doubtlesse it was now some space of yeares, since he made that request: For he was now stricken in age, and had ceased to hope; yet had God laid it vp all the while, and when hee thinks not of it, brings it forth to effect: Thus doth the mercie of our God deale with his patient, and faithfull suppliants: In the seruour of their expectation hee many times holds them off, and when they least thinke of it, and haue forgotten their owne suite, hee graciously condescends: Delay of effect may not discourage our faith; It may bee God hath long granted, ere wee shall know of his grant. Many a father repents him of his fruitfulness, and hath such sonnes, as he wishes vnborne: but to haue so gracious and happy a sonne as the Angell foretold, could not be lesse comfort, then honour to the age of *Zacharie*: The prooffe of children makes them either the blessings, or crosses of their parents: To heare what his sonne should bee before he was, to heare that hee should haue such a sonne; A sonne, whose birth should concerne the ioy of many; A sonne, that should be great in the sight of the Lord; A sonne, that should bee sacred to God, filled with God, beneficiall to man; An harbinger to him, that was God and man, was newes enough to preuent the Angell, and to take away that tongue with amazement, which was after lost with incredulity.

The speech was so good, That it found not a sudden beliefe: This good newes surprised *Zacharie*; If the intelligence had taken leisure, that his thoughts might haue had time to debate the matter, hee had easily apprehended the infinite power of him that had promised; the patterne of *Abraham* and *Sara*; and would soone haue concluded the appearance of the Angell more miraculous then his prediction: Whereas now, like a man masked with the strangeness of that hee saw and heard, hee misdoubts the message, and asks: *How shall I know?* Nature was on his side, and alledged the impossibility of the euent, both from age and barrennesse; Supernaturall tidings at the first hearing astonish the heart, and are entertained with doubts by those, which vpon further acquaintance giue them the best wel-come.

The weake apprehensions of our imperfect faith are not so much to be censured, as pittied: It is a sure way for the heart, to be preuented with the assurance of the omnipotent power of God, to whom nothing is impossible: so shall the hardest points of faith goe downe easily with vs: If the eye of our mind looke vpward, it shall meet with nothing to auert, or interrupt it; but if right forward, or downeward, or round about, euery thing is a blocke in our way.

There is a difference betwixt desire of assurance, and vnbeliefe, wee cannot bee too carefull to raise vp our selues arguments to settle our faith; although it should be no faith, if it had no feete to stand vpon, but discursiue: In matters of faith, if reasons may bee brought for the conuiction of the gaine-sayers, it is well, if they bee helps, they cannot be grounds of our beliefe: In the most faithfull heart there are some sparkes of infidelitie; so to beleue, that we should haue no doubt at all, is scarce incident into flesh and blood: It is a great perfection, if wee haue attained to overcome our doubts. What did mis-leade *Zacharie*, but that which vses to guide others, Reason? (*I am old, and my wife is of great age,*) As if yeares, and drie loynes could be any let to him, which is able of very stones to raise vp children vnto *Abraham*: Faith and reason haue their limits; where reason ends, faith begins; and if reason will be encroching vpon the bounds of faith, she is streight taken captiue by infidelity:

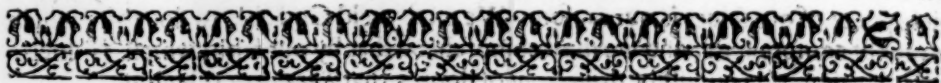
fidelitie: Wee are not fit to follow Christ, if wee have not denied our selues; and the chiefe peece of our selues is our reason: We must yeeld God able to doe that, which we cannot comprehend, and we must comprehend that by our faith, which is disclaimed by reason; *Hagar* must be driven out of doores, that *Sara* may rule alone.

The authoritie of the reporter, makes way for beliefe in things, which are otherwise hard to passe; although in the matters of God, we should not so much care, who speakes, as what is spoken, and from whom: The Angell tels his name, place, office, vnasked, that *Zacharie* might not thinke any newes impossible, that was brought him by an heavenly messenger: Euen where there is no vse of language, the spirits are distinguished by names, and each knowes his owne appellation, and others: Hee that gaue leaue vnto man his Image, to giue names vnto all his visible and inferiour creatures, did himselfe put names vnto the spirituall, and as their name is, so are they mighty and glorious: But lest *Zacharie* should no lesse doubt of the stile of the messenger, then of the errand it selfe, He is at once both confirmed, and punished with dumbnesse: That tongue, which mooued the doubt, must be tyed vp: He shall aske no more questions for forty weekes, because he asked this one distrustfully.

Neither did *Zacharie* lose his tongue for the time, but his cares also, he was not only mute, but deafe; For otherwise, when they came to aske his allowance for the name of his Sonne, they needed not to haue demanded it by signes, but by words: God will not passe ouer sleight offences, and those which may plead the most colourable pretences in his best children, without a sensible checke: it is not our holy entirenesse with God, that can beare vs out in the least sinne; yea rather the more acquaintance we haue with his Maiestie, the more sure we are of correction, when we offend: This may procure vs more fauour in our wel-doing, not lesse iustice in euill.

ZACHARIE staied, and the people waited, whether some longer discourse betwixt the Angell and him, then needed to be recorded, or whether astonishment at the apparition and newes, with-held him; I inquire not; the multitude thought him long, yet though they could but see a farre off, they would not depart, till hee returned to blesse them: Their patient attendance without, shames vs, that are hardly perswaded to attend within, whiles both our senses are imploied in our diuine seruices, and wee are admitted to be coagents with our Ministers.

At last *Zacharie* comes our speechlesse, & more amazes them with his presence, then with his delay. The eyes of the multitude, that were not worthy to see his vision, yet see the signes of his vision, that the world might be put into the expectation of some extraordinarie sequell: GOD makes way for his voice, by silence: His speech could not haue said so much, as his dumbnesse: *Zacharie* would faine haue spoken, and could not, with vs too many are dumbe, and need not: Negligence, Feare, Partialitie stop the moutes of many, which shall once say, Woe to mee, because I held my peace. His hand speakes that which he cannot with his tongue, and he makes them by signes to vnderstand that, which they might reade in his face: Those powers wee haue, we must vse: But though he haue ceased to speake, yet he ceased not to minister; Hee takes not this dumbnesse for a dismission, but staves out the eight dayes of his course, as one, that knew the eyes, and hands, and heart would be accepted of that God, which had bereaued him of his tongue: We may not straight take occasions of withdrawing our selues from the publike seruices of our God, much lesse vnder the Gospel: The Law, which stood much vpon bodily perfection, dispensed with age for attendance. The Gospell, which is all for the soule, regards those inward powers, which whiles they are vigorous, exclude all excuses of our ministration.



The Annuntiation of CHRIST.



THE Spirit of GOD was neuer so accurate in any description, as that which concerns the Incarnation of GOD: It was fit no circumstance should be omitted in that Story, whereon the faith and saluation of all the World dependeth: Wee cannot so much as doubt of this truth, and bee sued; no not the number of the moneth, nor the name of the Angell is concealed: Euery particle imports not more certainty, then excellence: The time is the first moneth after *Iohns* Conception, the prime of the Spring: Christ was conceived in the Spring, borne in the Solstice: He in whom the World receiued a new life, receiues life in the same season, wherein the World receiued his first life from him; and he which stretches out the dayes of his Church, and lengthens them to Eternitie, appeares after all the short and dimme light of the Law, and enlightens the World with his glory. The Messenger is an Angell; A man was too meane to carry the newes of the Conception of God: Neuer any businesse was conceived in Heauen, that did so much concerne the earth, as the Conception of the GOD of Heauen in Wombe of earth: No lesse then an Arch-Angell was worthy to beare this tidings, and neuer any Angell receiued a greater honour, then of this Embassage.

It was fit our reparation should answer our fall; an euill Angell was the first motioner of the one to *Eue* a Virgin, then espoused to *Adam*, in the Garden of Eden: A good Angel is the first reporter of the other to *Mary* a Virgin espoused to *Ioseph*, in that place, which (as the Garden of Galile,) had a name from flourishing: No good Angell could be the Author of our restauration, as that euill Angell was of our ruine; But that which those glorious spirits could not doe themselves, they are glad to report as done by the God of Spirits: Good newes reioyces the bearer; With what ioy did this holy Angell bring the newes of that Sauour, in whom we are redeemed to life, himselfe established in life and glory? The first Preacher of the Gospell was an Angell; that office must needs be glorious, that deriues it selfe from such a Predecessor: God appointed his Angell to be the first Preacher, and hath since called his Preachers Angels: The message is well suited; An Angell comes to a Virgin, *Gabriel* to *Mary*; He that was by signification the strength of God, to her that was by signification exalted by God, to the conceiuing of him, that was the God of strength: To a Maid but espoused, a Maid for the honour of Virginitie, espoused for the honour of Marriage: The marriage was in a sort made, not consummate, through the instinct of him, that meant to make her not an example, but a miracle of women: in this whole worke God would haue nothing ordinary: It was fit that she should be a married Virgin, which should bee a Virgin-mother: He that meant to take mans nature without mans corruption, would bee the Sonne of man without mans seed, would bee the seed of the woman without man; and amongst all women, of a pure Virgin; but amongst Virgins, of one espoused, that there might be at once a Witnesse, and a Guardian of her fruitfull Virginitie; If the same God had not bin the author of Virginitie and Marriage, he had neuer countenanced Virginitie by Marriage.

Whither doth this glorious Angell come to finde the Mother of him that was GOD, but to obscure Galile? A part, which euen the Iewes themselves despised, as forsaken of their priuiledges, (*Out of Galile ariseth no Prophet.*) Behold; an Angell comes to that Galile, out of which no Prophet comes, and the God of Prophets, and Angels descends to bee conceived in that Galile, out of which no Prophet ariseth: He that filleth all places, makes no difference of places: It is the person which giues honour and priuiledge to the place, not the place to the person; as the presence of God

God maketh the Heauen, the Heauen doth not make the honor glorious: No blind corner of Nazareth can hide the blessed Virgin from the Angell: The fauours of God will finde out his children, wherefoeuer they are with-drawne.

It is the fashion of God to seeke out the most despised, on whom to bestow his honours, we cannot runne away as from the iudgements, so not from the mercies of our God: The cottages of Galile are preferred by God to the famous Palaces of Ierusalem, he cares not how homely he conuerse with his owne: Why should we be transported with the outward glory of places, whiles our God regards it not? Wee are not of the Angels diet, if we had not rather be with the blessed Virgin at Nazareth, then with the proud Dames in the Court of Ierusalem: It is a great vanitie to respect any thing about goodnesse, and to dis-esteem goodnesse for any want. The Angell salutes the Virgin, he prayes not to her; He salutes her as a Saint, he prayes not to her as a Goddesse: For vs to salute her, as he did, were grosse presumption; For neither are we, as he was, neither is she, as shewas: If he that was a spirit saluted her, that was flesh and blood here on earth, it is not for vs, that are flesh and blood to salute her, which is a glorious spirit in Heauen: For vs, to pray to her in the Angels salutation, were to abuse the Virgin, the Angell, the salutation.

But how gladly doe we second the Angell in the praise of her, which was more ours, then his? How iustly doe we blesse her, whom the Angell pronounceth blessed? How worthily is she honoured of men, whom the Angell proclaimeth beloued of God? O blessed *Mary*, he cannot blesse thee, he cannot honour thee too much, that deifies thee not: That which the Angell said of thee, thou hast prophesied of thy selfe, we beleue the Angell, and thee: All Generations shall call thee blessed, by the fruit of whose wombe all Generations are blessed: If *Zacharie* were amazed with the sight of this Angell, much more the Virgin: That very Sex had more disadvantage of feare: If it had bin but a man, that had come to her in that secrecie and suddenesse, she could not but haue bin troubled; how much more, when the shining glorie of the person doubled the astonishment.

The troubles of holy mindes end euer in comfort: Ioy was the errand of the Angel, and not terrour. Feare (as all passions) disquiets the heart and makes it for the time vnfit to receiue the messages of God: Soone hath the Angell cleared these troublesome mists of passions; and sent out the beames of heavenly consolation in the remotest corner of her soule by the glad newes of her Sauiour: How can ioy, but enter into her heart, out of whose wombe shall come saluation: What roome can feare finde in that brest, that is assured of fauour? *Feare not Mary, for thou hast found fauour with God*: Let those feare, who know they are in displeasure, or know not they are gracious: Thine happie estate calls for confidence, and that confidence for ioy: What should, what can they feare, who are fauoured of him, at whom the Devils tremble? Not the presence of the good Angels, but the temptations of the euill strike many terrors into our weaknesse; we could not be dismayed with them, if wee did not forget our condition. We haue not receiued the spirit of bondage to feare againe, but the spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry *Abba Father*: If that Spirit (O God) witnesse with our spirits, that wee are thine, how can we feare any of those spirituall wickednesses? Giue vs assurance of thy fauour, and let the powers of Hell doe their worst.

It was no ordinarie fauour, that the Virgin found in Heauen: No mortall Creature was euer thus graced, that hee should take part of her nature, that was the God of nature; that he, which made all things, should make his humane bodie of hers; that her wombe should yeeld that flesh, which was personally vnited to the Godhead; that shee should beare him, that vpholds the world: *Loe, thou shalt concouine and beare a Sonne, and shalt call his name Iesus*. It is a question, whether there be more wonder in the Conception; or in the Fruit, the Conception of the Virgin; or Iesus conceived: Both are maruellous, but the former doth not more exceede all other wonders, then the latter exceedeth it. For the childe of a virgin is the reimprouement of that power, which

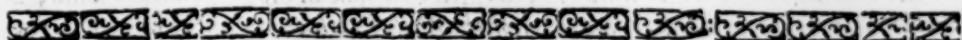
which created the world : but that God should bee incarnate of a Virgin, was an abasement of his Maiestie, and an exaltation of the creature beyond all example. Well was that Child worthy to make the Mother blessed : Here was a double Conception; one in the wombe of her bodie, the other of the soule : If that were more miraculous, this was more beneficiall; That was her priuiledge, this was her happinesse : If that were singular to her, this is common to all his chosen : There is no renewed heart, wherein thou, O Sauour, art not formed againe. Blessed bee thou, that hast herein made vs blessed. For what wombe can conceiue thee, and not partake of thee ? Who can partake of thee, and not be happier ?

Doubtlesse the Virgin vnderstood the Angell, as hee meant, of a present Conception, which made her so much more inquisitiue into the manner and meanes of this euent : *How shall this bee, since I know not a man ?* That shee should conceiue a Son by the knowledge of man after her Marriage consummate, could haue beene no wonder : But how then should that Sonne of hers bee the Sonne of God ? This demand was higher, how her present Virginitie should bee instantly fruitfull, might bee well worthy of admiration, of inquirie : Here was desire of information, not doubts of infidelitie; yea rather this question argues Faith : It takes for granted, that, which an vnbeleeuing heart would haue stuck at : Shee sayes not, who and whence art thou ? what Kingdome is this, where and when shall it bee erected ? but smoothly supposing all those strange things would be done, she insists onely in that which did necessarily require a further intimation, and doth not distrust, but demand : Neither doth she say, this cannot be, nor how can this be; but how shall this be ? so doth the Angell answer, as one, that knew he needed not to satisfie curiositie, but to informe iudgement, and vphold faith : He doth not therefore tell her of the manner, but of the Author of this act; *The Holy Ghost shall come vpon thee, and the power of the most High shall ouer-shadow thee* : It is enough to know, who is the vndertaker, and what he will doe : O God, what doe wee seeke a cleere light, where thou wilt haue a shadow ? No Mother knowes the manner of her naturall Conception; what presumption shall it bee for flesh and blood, to search how the Sonne of God tooke flesh and blood of his Creature ? It is for none, but the Almighty to know those workes, which he doth immediatly concerning himselfe; those that concerne vs, hee hath reuealed : Secrets to God, things reuealed to vs.

The answer was not so full, but that a thousand difficulties might arise out of the particularities of so strange a message, yet after the Angels Solution, wee heare of no more Obiections, no more Interrogations : The faithfull heart, when it once vnderstands the good pleasure of God, argues no more, but sweetly rests it selfe in a quiet expectation; *Behold the Seruants of the Lord, bee it to mee according to thy Word*. There is not a more noble prooffe of our Faith, then to captivate all the powers of our vnderstanding and will to our Creator, and without all sollicitations to goe blindfold, whither he will leade vs : All disputations with God (after his will knowne) arise from infidelitie : Great is the Mystery of godlinesse, and if we will giue Nature leaue to doubt, we cannot be Christians. O God, thou art faithfull, thou art powerful : It is enough, that thou hast said it; In the humilitie of our obedience we resigne our selves ouer to thee. Behold the Seruants of the Lord, bee it vnto vs, according to thy Word.

How fit was her wombe to conceiue the flesh of the Sonne of God by the power of the Spirit of God, whose brest had so soone by the power of the same Spirit conceived an assent to the will of God; and now of an Hand-mayd of God, she is advanced to the Mother of God. No sooner hath she said (*bee it done*) then it is done, the Holy Ghost ouer-shadows her, and formes her Sauour in her owne bodie. This very Angell, that talke with the blessed Virgin, could scarce haue beene able to expresse the ioy of her heart in the sense of this diuine burden : Neuer any mortall Creature had so much cause of exultation : How could shee, that was full of God be other then full of ioy in that God ? Griefe growes greater by concealing, Ioy by expression:

pression: The holy Virgin had vnderstood by the Angell, how her Cousin *Elizabeth* was no lesse of kin to her in condition; the fruitfulness of whose age did somewhat suite the fruitfulness of her Virginitie: Happinesse communicated, doubles it selfe; Here is no straining of courtesie; The blessed Maid whom vigor of age had more fitted for the way, hastens her journey into the Hill-countrie to visit that gracious Matron, whom God had made a signe of her miraculous Conception: Onely the meeting of Saints in Heauen can parallel the meeting of these two Cousins: The two wonders of the World are met vnder one rooffe, and congratulate their mutuall happinesse: When we haue Christ spiritually conceived in vs, we cannot be quiet, till we haue imparted our ioy: *Elizabeth* that holy Matron did no sooner wel-come her blessed Cousin, than her Babe wel-comes his Sauour; Both in the rettyred Clossets of their Mothers Womb are sensible of each others presence; the one by his omniscience, the other by instinct. He did not more fore-runne Christ, then ouer-runne Nature: How should our hearts leape within vs, when the Son of God vouchsafes to come into the secret of our soules, not to visit vs, but to dwell with vs, to dwell in vs!



The Birth of CHRIST.



All the actions of men, so especially the publike actions of publike men are ordered by God to other ends then their owne: This Edict went not so much out from *Augustus*, as from the Court of Heauen. What, did *Cesar* know *Ioseph* and *Mary*? His charge was vniuersall to a world of subiects, through all the Roman Empire: God intended this Cension onely for the blessed Virgin and her Sonne, that Christ might be borne, where he should: *Cesar* meant to fill his Coffers, God meant to fulfill his Prophecies, and so to fulfill them, that those, whom it concerned might not feeble the accomplishment: If God had directly commanded the Virgin to goe vp to Bethleem, shee had seene the intencion, and expected the issue; but that wise Moderator of all things, that workes his will in vs, loues so to doe it, as may be least with our fore-sight, and acquaintance, and would haue vs fall vnder his Decrees vnawares, that we may so much the more adore the depths of his Providence: Every Creature walkes blind-fold, onely he that dwels in light, sees whither they goe.

Doubtlesse, blessed *Mary* meant to haue bene deliuered of her diuine burden at home, and little thought of changing the place of Conception for another of her Birth: That house was honoured by the Angell, yea, by the ouer-shaddowing of the Holy Ghost, none could equally satisfie her hopes, or desires: It was fir, that hee, which made choice of the Wombe, wherein his Sonne should bee conceived, should make choice of the place, where his Sonne should be borne: As the worke is all his, so will he alone contriue all the circumstances to his owne ends: Oh the infinite Wisdom of God in casting all his Designs! There needes no other prooffe of Christ, then *Cesar* and Bethleem; and of *Cesars*, then *Augustus*; his Gouvernement, his Edict pleades the truth of the *Messias*: His Gouvernement, now was the deepe peace of all the World vnder that quiet Scepter, which made way for him, who was the Prince of Peace: If Wars be a signe of the time of his second comming, Peace was a signe of his first: His Edict, now was the Scepter departed from *Iuda*: It was the time for Shilo to come; No power was left in the Iewes, but to obey: *Augustus* is the Emperour of the World, vnder him *Herod* is the King of Iudea; *Cyrenius* is President of Syria; Iurie hath nothing of her owne. For *Herod* if hee were a King, yet hee was no Iew; and if hee had bin a Iew, yet he was no otherwise a King, then tributary and titular: The Edict came out from *Augustus*, was executed by *Cyrenius*; *Herod* is no actor in this seruice: Gaine and glory are the ends of this taxation, each man profess himselfe a subiect, and payd for the priuiledge of his seruitude: Now their very heads were not their owne, but must bee payed for to the head of forreine State: They which before stood vpon the termes of their immunitie, stoope at the last: The proud suggestions of *Iudas* the Galilean might shed their blood, and swell their stomacks,

but

but could not ease their yoke, neither was it the meaning of God, that holinesse (if they had bin as they pretended) should shelter them from subiection: A Tribute is imposed vpon Gods free people; This act of bondage brings them libertie: Now when they seemed most neglected of God, they are blessed with a Redeemer; when they are most pressed with forreine Souerignty, God sends them a King of their owne, to whom *Caesar* himselfe must be a subiect: The goodnesse of our God picks out the most needfull times of our reliefe, and comfort: Our extremities giue him the most glory. Whicher must *Ioseph* and *Mary* come to be taxed, but vnto *Bethleem Dauids* Citie? The very place proues their descent: He that succeeded *Dauid* in his Throne, must succeed him in the place of his Birth; so cleerely was *Bethleem* designed to this honour by the Prophets, that euen the Priests and the Scribes could point *Herod* vnto it, and assured him, the King of the Iewes could be no where else borne. *Bethleem* iustly the house of bread, the bread that came downe from Heauen is there giuen to the World; whence should we haue the bread of life, but from the house of bread? O holy *Dauid*, was this the Well of *Bethleem*, whereof thou didst so thirst to drinke of old, when thou saidst; *O that one would giue me drinke of the water of the Well of Bethleem!* Surely that other water, when it was brought thee by thy Worthies, thou powredst it on the ground, and wouldst not drinke of it: This was that liuing Water, for which thy soule longed, whereof thou saidst else-where; *As the Hart brayeth after the water-brooks, so longeth my soule after thee O God: My soule thirsteth for God, for the liuing God.*

It was no lesse then foure dayes iourney from *Nazareth* to *Bethleem*: How iust an excuse might the blessed Virgin haue pleaded for her absence? What woman did euer vndertake such a iourney so neere her deliuey? and doubtlesse *Ioseph*, which was now taught of God to loue and honour her, was loth to draw forth a deare Wife in so vawieldy a case, into so manifest hazard: But the charge was peremptory, the obedience exemplary; The desire of an inoffensue obseruance euen of Hethenish authority, digests all difficulties: Wee may not take easie occasions to withdraw our obedience to supreme commands; yea how didst thou (O Saviour) by whom *Augustus* reigned, in the wombe of thy Mother yeeld this homage to *Augustus*: The first lesson that euer thy example taught vs, was obedience.

After many steps are *Ioseph* and *Mary* come to *Bethleem*: The plight, wherein she was, would not allow any speed, and the forced leisure of the iourne causeth disappointment: the end was worse then the way, there was no rest in the way, there was no roome in the Inne: It could not be, but that there were many of the kindred of *Ioseph* and *Mary* at that time in *Bethleem*: For both there were their Ancestors, borne, if not themselves; and thither came vpall the Cousins of their blood: yet there and then doth the holy Virgin want roome to lay either her head, or her burthen. If the house of *Dauid* had not lost all mercy and good nature, a Daughter of *Dauid* could not so neere the time of her travell, haue bin destitute of lodging in the City of *Dauid*. Little did the *Bethleemites* thinke what a guest they refused. Else they would gladly haue opened their doores to him, which was able to open the gates of heauen to them. Now their inhospitality is punishment enough to it selfe: They haue lost the honour and happinesse of being host to their God: Euen still, O blessed Saviour, thou standest at our doores and knockest, every motion of thy good Spirit tells vs, thou art there: Now thou comest in thine owne name, and there thou standest; whiles thy head is full of dew, and thy lockes wet with the drops of the night: If we suffer carnall desires, and worldly thoughts to take vp the lodging of our heart, and reuell within vs, whiles thou waytest vpon our admission, surely our iudgement shall be so much the greater, by how much better we know, whom we haue excluded. What doe we cry shame on the *Bethleemites*, whilest wee are wilfully more churlish, more vnthankfull? There is no roome in my heart for the wonder at this humilitie: He, for whom heauen is too strait, whom the heauen of heauens cannot containe, lies in the strait cabin of the wombe, and when he would enlarge himselfe for the world, is not allowed the roome of an Inne: The many mansions of heauen were at his disposing, the earth

earth was his, and the fulnes of it, yet he suffers himselfe to be refused of a base cottage, and complaineth not: What measure should discontent vs wretched men, when thou (O God) farest thus from thy creatures? How should we learne both to want and abound, from thee, which abounding with the glory and riches of heauen, wouldst want a lodging in thy first welcome to the earth? Thou camest to thine owne, and thy owne receiued thee not: How can it trouble vs to be reiected of the world, which is not ours? what wonder is it, if thy seruants wandred abroad in sheeps skins, and goats skins, destitute and afflicted, when their Lord is denied harbour? how should all the world blush at this indignity of Bethleem? Hee that came to saue men, is sent for his first lodging to the beasts: The stable is become his Inne, the cratch his bed: O strange cradle of that great King, which heauen it selfe may enuy! O Sauour, thou that wert both the Maker and Owner of heauen, of earth, couldst haue made thee a Palace without hands, couldst haue commanded thee an empty room in those houses, which thy creatures had made? When thou didst but bid the Angels auoid their first place, they fell downe from heauen like lightning; & when in thine humbled estate thou didst but say, *I am he*, who was able to stand before thee? How easie had it bin for thee to haue made place for thy selfe in the throngs of the stateliest Courts? Why wouldst thou be thus homely, but that by contemning worldly glories, thou mightst teach vs to cōtemne them? that thou mightst sanctifie pouerty to them, whom thou call'st vnto want? that since thou which hadst the choice of al earthly conditions, wouldst be borne poore and despised, those which must want out of necessity, might not thinke their pouerty grieuous. Here was neither friend to entertaine, nor seruant to attend, nor place wherein to be attended, onely the poore beasts gaue way to the God of al the world: It is the great mystery of godlines, that God was manifested in the flesh, and scene of Angels; but here which was the top of all wonders, the very beasts might see their Maker: For those spirits to see God in the flesh, it was not so strange, as for the brute creatures to see him, which was the God of spirits: He, that would be led into the wilderness amongst wilde beasts to be tempted, would come into the house of beasts to be borne, that from the height of his diuine glory his humiliation might be the greater: How can we be abased low enough for thee (O Sauour) that hast thus neglected thy selfe for vs? That the visitation might be answerable to the homelines of the place, attendants, prouision, who shall come to congratulate his birth, but poore shepherds? The Kings of the earth rest at home, and haue no summons to attend him, by whom they reigne: God hath chosen the weake things of the world to confound the mighty: In an obscure time (the night) vnto obscure men (shepherds) doth God manifest the light of his Son, by glorious Angels: It is not our meannesse (O God) that cā exclude vs from the best of thy mercies; yea thus far dost thou respect persons, that thou hast put downe the mighty, and exalted them of low degree. If these shepherds had beene snorting in their beds, they had no more scene Angels, nor heard newes of their Sauior, then their neighbours; Their vigilancy is honored with this heauenly vision: those which are industrious in any calling, are capable of further blessings, whereas the idle are fit for nothing but temptation. No lesse then a whole Choe of Angels are worthy to sing the hymne, of *Glory to God*, for the incarnation of his Son: What ioy is enough for vs, whose nature he tooke, and whom he came to restore by his incarnation? If we had the tongues of Angels, wee could not raise this note high enough to the praise of our glorious Redeemer. No sooner doe the shepherds heare the newes of a Sauior, then they run to Bethleem to seek him; Those that left their beds to tend their flocks, leaue their flocks to enquire after their Sauior: No earthly thing is too deare to be forsaken for Christ: If we suffer any worldly occasion to stay vs from Bethleem, we care more for our sheep, then our soules: It is not possible that a faithfull heart should heare where Christ is, and not labour to the sight, to the fruition of him. Where art thou, O Sauior, but at home in thine owne house, in the assembly of thy Saints? Where art thou to be found but in thy word and Sacraments? yea there thou seekest for vs: if there we hast not to seek for thee, we are worthy to want thee, worthy that our want of thee here, should make vs want the presence of thy face for ever.

The Sages and the Starre.

He shepherds and the cratch accorded well; yet euen they saw nothing which they might not contemne; neither was there any of those shepherds that seemed not more like a king, then that King, whom they came to see. But oh the Diuine Maieſty, that shined in this basenes! There lies the Babe in the stable, crying in the manger, whom the Angels came downe from heauen to proclaime, whom the Sages come from the East to adore, whom an heauenly Star notifies to the world, that now men might see, that heauen and earth serues him that neglected himselfe. Those lights that hang low, are not far seene, but those which are high placed, are equally seene in the remotest distances. Thy light, O Sauior was no lesse then heauēly: The East saw that, which Bethleem might haue seen: oft-times those which are neereſt in place, are farthest off in affection: Large obiects when they are too close to the eie, doe so ouer-fill the sense, that they are not discerned. What a shame is this to Bethleem? the Sages came out of the East to worship him, whom that village refused: The Bethleemites were Iewes; The wise-men Gentiles: This first entertainment of Christ was a preſage of the ſequel; The Gētiles shall come from far to adore Christ, whiles the Iewes reieſt him. Those Easterlings were great searchers of the depths of nature, professed Philosophers, them hath God singled out to the honor of the manifestation of Christ: Humane learning well improued makes vs capable of diuine: There is no knowledge, wherof God is not the Author; he would neuer haue bestowed any gift, that should leade vs away from himselfe; It is an ignorant conceit, that inquiry into nature should make men Atheous: No man is so apt to see the Star of Christ, as a diligent disciple of Philosophy: doubtlesse this light was viſible vnto more, only they followed it, which knew it had more then nature: He is truly wise, that is wise for his owne ſoule: If these wise men had bin acquainted with all the other ſtars of heauen, & had not ſeene the Star of Christ, they had had but light enough to lead them into vtter darkneſſe; Philosophy without the ſtar, is but the wiſp of error. These Sages were in a mean between the Angels and the ſhepherds: God would in all the ranks of intelligent creatures haue ſome to be witneſſes of his Son: The Angels direct the ſhepherds, the Star guides the Sages; the duller capacity hath the more cleare & powerfull helps; the wiſedome of our good God proportions the means vnto the diſpoſition of the perſons; their Astronomy had taught them, this ſtar was not ordinary, whether in ſight or in brightnes, or in motion. The eies of nature might well ſee, that ſome ſtrange newes was portended to the world by it; but that this ſtar deſigned the birth of the *Meſſias*, there needed yet another light: If the ſtar had not beſides had the commentary of a reuelation from God, it could haue led the wiſe-men only into a fruitlesse wōder: giue them to be the off-ſpring of Balaam, yet the true prediction of that falſe prophet was not enough warrant: If he told them, the *Meſſias* ſhould ariſe as a ſtar out of *Iacob*, he did not tel them, that a ſtar ſhould ariſe far from the poſterity of *Iacob*, at the birth of the *Meſſias*; He that did put that Propheſie into the mouth of *Balaam*, did alſo put this illumination into the heart of the Sages: the Spirit of God is free to breathe where he liſteth: Many ſhal come from the East and the Weſt to ſeeke Chriſt, when the children of the Kingdome ſhall ſhut out: euen then God did not ſo confine his election to the pale of the Church, as that he did not ſometimes looke out for ſpeciall inſtruments of his glory. Whither doe theſe Sages come, but to Hieruſalem? where ſhould they hope to heare of the new King, but in the mother City of the Kingdom? The conduct of the ſtar was firſt only general to Iudea: the reſt is for a time left to enquiry: they were not brought thither for their own ſakes, but for Iewries, for the worlds; that they might help to make the Iewes inexcusable, & the world faithfull: That their tongues threſore might blazon the birth of Chriſt, they are brought to the head Citie of Iudea, to report, and inquire: their wiſdome could, nor teach them to imagine, that a King could be borne to Iudea, of that note and magnificence, that a Starre from heauen ſhould publiſh him to the earth, and that his ſubiects ſhould not know it: and therefore as preſuppoſing a common notice, they ſay, *Where is he*

he, that is borne King of the Iewes? There is much deceit in probabilities, especially when we meddle with spirituall matters. For God vses still to goe a way by himselfe.

If we iudge according to reason and appearance, who is so likely to vnderstand heauenly truths, as the profound Doctors of the world? these God passeth ouer, and reueales his will to babes? Had these Sages met with the shepherds of the villages neer Bethleem they had receiued that intelligence of Christ, which they did vainly seek from the learned Scribes of Ierusalem: The greatest clerkes are not alwaies the wisest in the affaires of God; these things goe not by discourse, but by reuelation.

No sooner hath the Star brought them within the noyse of Ierusalem, then it is vanished out of sight: God would haue their eyes lead them so far, as till their tongues might be set on worke to win the vocall attestation of the chiefe Priests & Scribes, to the fore-appointed place of our Sauours natiuity: If the Star had carried them directly to Bethleem, the learned Iewes had neuer searched the truth of those prophecies, wherewith they are since iustly conuincied: God neuer withdraws our helps, but for a further aduantage; Howeuer our hopes seem crossed, where his Name may gain, we cannot complain of losse.

Little did the Sages thinke, this question would haue troubled *Herod*; they had (I feare) concealed their message, if they had suspected this euent: Sure, they thought it might be some Sonne, or grandchild of him, which then held the Throne, so as this might winne fauour from *Herod*, rather then an vnwelcome fear of riuallitie. Doubtlesse they went first to the Court, where else should they aske for a King? The more pleasing this newes had bin, if it had falne vpon *Herods* owne loines, the more grieuous it was to light vpon a stranger: If *Herod* had not ouer-much affected greatnesse, he had not vpon those indirect termes aspired to the Crown of Iewry, so much the more therefore did it trouble him to heare the rumour of a successor, and that not of his owne. Setled greatnesse cannot abide either change, or partnership: If any of his subiects had moued this question I feare his head had answered it. It is well, that the name of forrainers could excuse these Sages: *Herod* could not be brought vp among the Iewes, & not haue heard many and confident reports of a *Messias*, that should ere long arise out of Israel; and now when he heares the fame of a King borne, whom a Star from heauen signifies and attends; he is nettled with the newes: Every thing affrights the guilty: Vsurpation is full of ieaiousies, and feare, no lesse full of projects and imaginations; it makes vs think euery bush a man, and euery man a theefe.

Why art thou troubled (O *Herod*?) A King is borne, but such a King, as whose Scepter may euer concur with lawfull souerainty; yea such a King, as by whom Kings doe hold their Scepters, not lose them: If the wise-men tell thee of a King, the Starre tells thee hee is heauenly: Here is good cause of security, none of feare: The most generall enmities and oppositions to good, arise from mistakings: If men could but know, how much safety and sweetnesse there is in all diuine truth, it could receiue nothing from them but welcomes and gratulations: Misconceits haue bene still guilty of all wrongs, and persecutions. But if *Herod* were troubled (as Tyranny is still suspicious) why was all Ierusalem troubled with him? Hierusalem which now might hope for a relaxation of her bonds, for a recovery of her liberty, and right! Hierusalem which now onely had cause to lift vp her drooping head in the ioy and happinesse of a redeemer? yet not *Herods* Court, but euén Hierusalem was troubled; so had this miserable City bene ouer-toiled with change, that now they were settled in a condition quierly euill, they are troubled with the newes of better: They had now got a habit of seruility, & now they are so acquainted with the yoke, that the very noyse of libertie, (which they supposed would not come with ease) began to be vnwelcome.

To turne the causes of ioy into sorrow, argues extreme dejectednesse, and a distemper of iudgement no lesse then desperates Feare puts on a visor of deuotion; *Herod* calls his learned counsell, & as not doubting, whether the *Messias* should be borne, he askes, where he shal be borne? In the disparition of that other light, there is a perpetually fixed Star, shining in the writings of the Prophets, that guides the chiefe Priests & Scribes directly vnto Bethleem: As yet enuy, and preiudice had not blinded the eies, & peruer-

ted the hearts of the Iewish teachers; so as now they clearly iustifie that Christ, whom they afterwards condemne, and by thus iustifying him, condemne themselves in reiecting him: The water, that is vntroubled, yeelds the visage perfectly: If God had no more witnesse, but from his enemies, we haue ground enough of our faith.

Herod feared, but dissembled his feare, as thinking it a shame that strangers should see there could any power arise vnder him, worthy of his respect or awe: Out of an vnwillignesse therefore to discouer the impotency of his passion, he makes little adoe of the matter, but only, after a priuy inquisition into the time, imploies the informers in the search of the person; *Goe, and search diligently for the Babe, &c.* It was no great iourney from Ierusalem to Bethleem; how easily might *Herods* cruelty haue secretly suborned some of his bloody Courtiers to this inquiry, and execution: If God had not meant to mock him, before he found himselfe mocked of the wise men, he had rather sent before their iourney, then after their disappointment: But that God, in whose hands all hearts are, did purposely beset him, that he might not finde the way to so horrible a mischiefe.

There is no villany so great, but it will maske it selfe vnder a shew of piety: *Herod* will also worship the Babe; The courtesie of a false Tyrant is death; A crafty hypocrite neuer meanes so ill, as when he speaketh fairest: the wise-men are vpon their way full of expectation, full of desire; I see no man either of the City, or Court to accompany them; Whether distrust, or feare hindred them, I inquire not: but of so many thousand Iewes, no one stirs his foot to see that King of theirs, which strangers came so far to visite: yet were not these resolute Sages discouraged with this solitarinesse, and small respect, nor drawne to repent of their iourney, as thinking, What doe we come so farre to honour a King whom no man will acknowledge? What meane we to trauell so many hundred miles to see that, which the inhabitants will not looke out to behold? but cheerfully renew their iourney to that place, which the ancient light of prophesie had designed; And now behold, God encourages their holy forwardnesse from heauen, by sending them their first guide, as if he had said, What need ye care for the neglect of men, when ye see heauen honours the King whom ye seek? What ioy these Sages conceived, when their eyes first beheld the re-appearance of that happy Starre, they onely can tell, that after a long and sad night of tenection, they haue scene the louing countenance of God shining forth vpon their soules: If with obedience and courage wee can follow the calling of God, in difficult enterprises, we shall not want supplies of comfort. Let nor vs be wanting to God, we shall be sure, he cannot be wanting to vs.

Hee that led Israel by a Pillar of fire into the Land of Promise, leads the wise-men by a Starre, to the Promised seed: All his directions partake of that light, which is in him; For God is light: this Star moues both slowly and low, as might be fittest for the pace, for the purpose of these Pilgrimes: It is the goodnes of God that in those meanes wherein we cannot reach him, he descends vnto vs. Surely when the Wise-men saw the Star stand still, they looked about to see, what Palace there might be neare vnto that station; fit for the birth of a King; neither could they thinke that forty shed was it, which the Star meant to point out, but finding their guide settled ouer that base rooffe, they go in to see, what ghest it held: They enter, and, O God, what a King doe they finde! how poore? how contemptible? wrapt in clours, laid in straw, cradled in the manger, attended with beasts! what a sight was this, after all the glorious promises of that Star, after the predictions of Prophets, after the magnificence of their expectation?

All their way afforded nothing so despicable, as that Babe, whom they came to worship: But as those, which could not haue bin wise-men, vnlesse they had knowne that the greatest glories haue arisen from meane beginnings, they fall down, & worship that hidden maiesty: This basenesse hath bred wonder in them, not contempt; they well knew, the Star could not lye there which saw his Star a far off in the East, when hee lay swaddled in Bethleem, doe also see his royalty further off in the despised estate of his infancy: A royalty more then humane: They well knew, that Stars did not vs to attend earthly Kings; and if their ayme had not bene higher, what was a Iewish King to Persian strangers? answerable therefore hereunto was their adoration. Neither did they lift

vp empty hands, to him, whom they worship, but presented him with the most precious commodities of their country, *Gold, Incense, Myrrh*; not as thinking to enrich him with these, but by way of homage acknowledging him the Lord of these: If these Sages had beene Kings, and had offered a Princely weight of gold, the blessed Virgin had not needed in her purification to haue offered two young pigeons, as the signe of her penury: As God loues not empty hands, so he measures fulnesse by the affection: Let it be Gold, or Incense, or Myrrh, that we offer him, it cannot but please him, who doth not vse to aske, how much, but how good.

The Purification.

Here could be no impurity in the Sonne of God, & if the best substance of a pure Virgin, carried in it any taint of *Adam*, that was scowred away by sanctification in the wombe, and yet the Sonne would be circumcised and the Mother purified: He that came to be sinne for vs, would in our persons be legally vncleane, that by satisfying the law, he might take away our vncleannesse: Though he were exempted from the common condition of our birth, yet he would not deliuer himselfe from those ordinary rites, that implied the weakenesse, & blemishes of humanity: He would fulfill one law to abrogate it, another to satisfie it. He that was above the Law, would come vnder the Law, to free vs from the Law: Not a day would be changed, either in the Circumcision of Christ, or the Purification of *Mary*. Here was neither conuenience of place, nor of necessaryes for so painfull a worke, in the stable of Bethleem; yet he that made, and gaue the Law, will rather keepe it with difficulty, than transgresse it with ease.

Why wouldest thou, O blessed Saniour, suffer that sacred foreskin to be cut off but that by the power of thy circumcision, the same might be done to our soules, that was done to thy body? we cannot be therefore thine, if our hearts bee vncircumcised: Doe thou that in vs, which was done to thee for vs, cut off the superfluitie of our malicioussnes, that we may be holy, in, & by thee, which for vs wert content to be legally impure.

There was shame in thy birth, there was paine in thy circumcision: After a contemptible welcome into the world, that a sharp rasor should passe thorow thy skin for our sakes, (which can hardly endure to bleed for our owne) it was the praise of thy wonderful mercy, in so early humiliation: What paine, or contempt should we refuse for thee, that hast made no spare of thy selfe for vs? Now is Bethleem left with too much honour, there is Christ borne, adored, circumcised: No sooner is the blessed virgin either able, or allowed to walke, than she travels to Ierusalem, to performe her holy Rites for her selfe, for her Son, to purifie her selfe, to present her son: She goes not to her owne house at Nazareth, she goes to Gods House at Ierusalem: If purifying were a shadow, yet thanksgiving is a substance: Those whom God hath blessed with fruit of body, and safety of deliuerance, if they make not their first iourney to the Temple of God, they partake more of the vnthankfulnesse of *Eur*, than *Marias* deuotion.

Her forty daies therefore were no sooner out, than *Mary* comes vp to the holy City. The rumour of a new King borne at Bethleem, was yet fresh at Ierusalem, since the report of the wise-men: & what good newes had this beene for any picke-thanke to carry to the Court? Here is the Babe, whom the Starre signified; whom the Sages inquired for; whom the Angells proclaimed, whom the Shepherds talk of; whom the Scribes and high Priests notified, whom *Herod* seeks after: Yet vnder that Ierusalem, which was troubled at the report of his Birth, is Christ come, and all tongues are fixt vp, that he, which sent for Ierusalem to Bethleem to seeke him, findes him not, who (as to cōf. termine *Herod*) is come from Bethleem to Ierusalem. Dangers that are aldoose off, and but possible, may not hinder vs from the duty of our deuotion: God saw it not yet time to let loose the fury of his aduersaries, whom hee holds vp; like some eager *Ma-ques*, & then only lets goe when they shall most shame themselves, & glorifie him: Well might the blessed Virgin haue wrangled with the Law, and challenged an im-

manity from all ceremonies of purification; what should I neede purging, which did not conceiue in sinne? This is for those mothers, whose births are vncleane, mine is from God, which is puritie it selfe: The law of *Moses* reaches onely to those women, which have conceiued seed, I conceived not this seed, but the Holy Ghost in me: The law extends to the mothers of those sons, which are vnder the law, mine is aboue it. But as one, that cared more for her peace, than her priuiledge, & more desired to be free from offence, than from labour & charge, she dutifully fulfils the Law of that God, whom she carried in her wombe, & in her armes: Like the mother of him, who though he knew the children of the Kingdome free: yet would pay tribute vnto *Cesar*: Like the mother of him, whom it behoued to fulfill all righteousnesse: And if she were so officious in ceremonies, as not to admit of any excuse in the very circumstance of her obedience, how much more strict was she in the maine duties of moralitie? That soule is fit for the Spirituall conception of Christ, that is conscionably scrupulous in obseruing all Gods Commandements, whereas he hates all alliance to a negligent, or froward heart.

The law of Purification proclaimes our vncleannesse: The mother is not allowed after her child-birth to come vnto the Sanctuary, or to touch any hallowed thing, till her set time be expired; What are we whose very birth infects the mother that beares vs? At last, she comes to the Temple, but with sacrifices, either a Lambe, & a Pigeon, or Turtle, or (in the meaner estate) two Turtle doves, or yong Pigeons: Whereof one is for a burnt offering, the other for a sin-offering: The one for thanksgiving, the other for expiation: For expiation of a double sinne, of the mother, that conceived, of the childe, that was conceived. We are all born sinners, & it is a iust question, whether we doe more infect the world, or the world vs? They are grosse flatterers of nature, that tell her, she is cleane: If our liues had no sin, we bring enough with vs; the very infants, that liues not to sinne as *Adam*, yet he sinned in *Adam*, & is sinfull in himselfe. But oh, the vnspokeable mercy of our God! we provide the sin, he provides the remedy: Behold an expiation well-neare, as early, as our sin; the blood of a young lambe, or dove, yea rather the blood of Him, whose innocencie was represented by both, cleanseth vs presently from our filthinesse. First, went circumcision, then came the sacrifice, that by two holy acts, that which was naturally vnholie, might be hallowed vnto God: Vnder the Gospell our Baptisme hath the force of both: It does away our corruption by the water of the Spirit: It applies to vs the sacrifice of Christs blood, whereby we are cleas'd: Oh that we could magnifie this goodnes of our God, which hath not left our very infancy without redresse, but hath provided helps, whereby we may be deliuered from the danger of our hereditary euils.

Such is the fauourable respect of our wise God, that he would not haue vs vndoe our selues with deuotion: the seruice he requires of vs, is ruled by our abilities: Euery poore mother was not able to bring a lambe for her offering: there was none so poore, but might procure a paire of turtles or pigeons: These doth God both prescribe, and accept from poorer hands; no lesse, than the beasts of a thousand mountaines: Hee lookes for some what of euery one, not of euery one alike: Since it is he, that makes differences of abilities (to whom it were as easie to make all rich) his meey will make no difference in the accepration: The truth and heartinesse of obedience is that, which hee will crowne in his meanest seruants: A mite from the poore widdow, is more worth to him, than the talents of the wealthy.

After all the presents of those Easterne worshippers (who intended rather homage, than ditation) the blessed Virgin comes in the forme of poverty with her two doves vnto God; she could not without some charge lie all this while at Bethleem, she could not without charge trauell from Bethleem to Ierusalem; Her offering confesseth her penury; The best yet not euery the wealthiest: Who can despise any one for want, when the mother of Christ was not rich enough to bring a lambe for her purification? We may be as happy in tassel, as in tassel.

While the blessed Virgin brought her Son into the Temple, with that paire of doves, here were more doves than a paire: They, for whose sake that offering was brought, were more doves, than the doves that were brought for that offering: Her Son, for whom she brought that dove to be sacrificed, was that sacrifice, which the dove represented: There

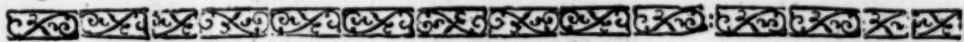
was nothing in him but perfection, of innocence, & the oblation of him is that, whereby all mothers and sons are fully purified. Since in our selues we cannot be innocent, happy are we, if we can haue the spotlesse Doue sacrificed for vs, to make vs innocent in him.

The blessed Virgin had more businesse in the temple then her owne; she came, as to purifie her selfe, so to present her Son: Euery male that first opened the wombe, was holy vnto the Lord. He that was the Son of God by eternall generation before times, & by miraculous conception in time, was also by cōmon course of nature consecrate vnto God: It is fit the holy mother should present God with his own: Her first borne was the first borne of all creatures; It was he, whose Temple it was, that he was presented in, to whom all the first borne of all creatures were consecrated, by whom they were accepted; and now is he brought in his mothers armes to his owne house, and as man is presented to himselfe as God. If *Moses* had neuer written Law of Gods speciall proprietie in the first borne, this Son of Gods Essence and Loue had taken possession of the Temple: His right had beene a perfect law to himselfe: Now his obedience to that law: which himselfe had giuen, doth no lesse call him thither, than the challenge of his peculiar interest.

He that was the Lord of all creatures (euer since he strooke the first borne of the Egyptians) requires the first male of all creatures, both man & beast, to be dedicated to him; wherein God caused a miraculous euent to second nature, which seemes to challenge the first & best for the Maker: By this rule, God should haue had his seruice done only by the hieres of Israel: But since God, for the honor & remuneration of *Leui*, had chosen out that Tribe to minister vnto him, now the first borne of all Israel must be presented to God, as his due, but by allowance redeemed to their parents: As for beasts, the first male of the cleane beasts must be sacrificed, of vnclean exchanged for a price. So much morality is there in this constitution of God, that the best of all kindes is fit to be consecrated to the Lord of all, Euery thing we haue is too good for vs, if we thinke any thing we haue too good for him.

How glorious did the Temple now seeme, that the Owner was within the walls of it? Now was the houre, & ghest come, in regard whereof the secōd Temple shold surpasse the first: this was his house built for him, dedicated to him: There had he dwelt long in his spirituall Prefeēce, in his typicall: There was nothing either placed, or done within those walls, wherby he was not resembled, & now the body of those shadowes is come, & presents himselfe, where he had been euer represented: Ierusalem is now euery where: There is no Church, no Christian hart, which is not a Temple of the liuing God: There is no Temple of God wherein Christ is not presented to his Father: Looke vpon him (O God) in whom thou art wel pleased, & in him, and for him be well pleased with vs.

Vnder the Gospell we are all first-borne, all heires: Euery soule is to bee holy vnto the Lord, we are a royall generation, an holy Priesthood: Our baptisme as it is our circumcision, and our sacrifice of purification, so is it also our presentation vnto God: Nothing can become vs but holinesse. O God, to whom we are deuoted, serue thy selfe of vs, glorifie thy selfe by vs, till we shall by thee be glorified with thee.



HEROD and the Infants.



Will might these wise men haue suspected *Herods* secrecy; If hee had meant well, what needed that whispering? That which they published in the streets, he asks in his priuy chamber; yet they not misdoubring his intention purpose to fulfil his charge: It could not in their apprehension but be much honour to them, to make their successe knowne, that now both King and people might see, it was not fancie that led them, but an assured reuelation: That God, which brought them thither, diuerted them, & caused their eies shut, so guide them the best way home.

These Sages made a happy voyage: for now they grew into further acquaintance with God: They are honoured with a second messenger from heauen: They saw the starre in the way, the Angell in their bed: The starre guided their iourney vnto Christ, the Angell directed their returne: They saw the starre by day, a vision by night: God spake to their

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cies by the starre, he speaks to their heart by a dreame: No doubt, they had left much noise of Christ behinde them: they that did so publish his birth by their inquiry at Ierusalem, could not be silent when they found him at Bethleem. If they had returned by *Herod*, I feare they had come short home; He that meant death to the Babe for the name of a King, could meane no other to those that honoured and proclaimed a new King, and erected a Throne besides his: they had done what they came for; and now that God, whose businesse they came about, takes order at once for his Sonnes safety, & for theirs: God, which is perfection it selfe, neuer beginnes any businesse, but he makes an end, and ends happily; When our waies are his, there is no danger of miscarriage.

Well did these wise-men know the difference, as of stars, so of dreames; they had learned to distinguish betweene the naturall and diuine; & once apprehending God in their sleepe, they follow him waking, & returne another way. They were no subiects to *Herod*, his command pressed them so much the lesse, or if the being within his dominions had bine no lesse bound, than natiue subiection, yet where God did countermand *Herod*, there could be no question, whom to obey. They say not, We are in a strange country, *Herod* may meet with vs, It can be no lesse than death to mocke him in his owne territories; but cheerfully put themselues vpon the way, & trust God with the successe: Where men command with God, we must obey men for God, and God in men; when against him, the best obedience is to deny obedience, & to turne our backs vpon *Herod*.

The wise-men are safely arriued in the East, and fill the world full of expectation, as themselues are full of wonder: *Ioseph* and *Mary* are returned with the Babe to that Ierusalem, where the wise men had inquired for his birth. The Citie was doubtlesse still full of that rumor, and little thinks, that he whom they talke of, was so neere them: From thence they are, at least in their way to Nazareth, where they purpose their abode: God prevents them by his Angell, and sends them for safety into Egypt; *Ioseph* was not wont to bee so full of visions: It was not long since the Angell appeared vnto him to iustifie the innocency of the mother, and the Deity of the Sonne; now hee appeares for the preseruatiō of both, and a preseruatiō by flight: Could *Ioseph* now choose, but thinke, Is this the King, that must saue Israel, that needs to be saued by me? If he be the Sonne of God, how is he subiect to the violence of men? How is he Almighty, that must saue himselfe by flight? or how must he flie to saue himselfe out of that land, which he comes to saue? But faithfull *Ioseph* hauing bene once tutored by the Angell, and hauing heard, what the wise-men said of the Starre, what *Simeon* & *Anna* said in the Temple, labours not so much to reconcile his thoughts, as to subiect them; and as one, that knew it safer to suppress doubts, than to assoile them, can belecue, what he vnderstands not; and can wonder, where he cannot comprehend.

O! strange condition of the King of all the world! He could not be borne in a baser estate, yet euen this he cannot enioy with safety. There was no roome for him in Bethleem, there will be no roome for him in Iudea: He is no sooner come to his owne, than he must flie from them; that he may saue them, he must auoid them: Had it not bene easie for thee (O Saviour) to haue acquit thy selfe from *Herod*, a thousand waies? What could and arme of flesh haue done against the God of spirits? What had it bene for thee to haue set *Herod* five yeeres sooner vnto his place? what to haue commanded fire from heauen on those, that should haue come to apprehend thee? or to haue bidden the earth to receiue them aliue, whom she meant to swallow dead? We suffer misery, because we must; thou, because thou wouldest: The same will that brought thee from heauen into earth, sends thee from Iury to Egypt; as thou wouldest be borne meane and miserable, so thou wouldest liue subiect to humane vexations, that thou, which hast taught vs how good it is to beare the yoke euen in our youth, mightst sanctifie to vs early afflictions. Or whether (O Father) since it was the purpose of thy wisdom to manifest thy Sonne by degrees vnto the world, was it thy will thus to hide him for a time, vnder our infirmity? & what other is our condition? we are no sooner borne thine, than we are persecuted. If the Church trauell, and bring forth a male, she is in danger of the Dragons streames: What doe the members complaine of the same measure, which

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was offered to the Head: Both our births are accompanied with reares.

Euen of those, whose mature age is full of trouble, yet the Infancie is commonly quiet, but here life and toile began together. O blessed Virgin, when already did the sword begin to pierce thy soule: thou which wert forced to beare thy Son in thy wombe, from Nazareth to Bethleem, must now beare him in thy armes from Iury into Egypt; yet couldst thou not complaine of the way, whilest thy Saviour was with thee: His presence alone was able to make the stable a Temple, Egypt a Paradise, the way more pleasing than rest. But whither then? O whither dost thou carry that blessed burthen, by which thy selfe & the world are vpholden? To Egypt, the slaughter house of Gods people, the furnace of Israels ancient affliction, the sinke of the world: *Out of Egypt haue I called my Son* (saith God.) That thou calledst thy Sonne out of Egypt, O God, is no maruell; It is a maruell, that thou calledst him into Egypt, but that we know, all earths are thine, and all places and men are like figures vpon a table, such as thy disposition makes them: What a change is here? Israel the first borne of God, flies out of Egypt, into the promised Land of Iudea; Christ the First borne of all creatures, flies from Iudea into Egypt: Egypt is become the Sanctuary, Iudea the Inquisition-house of the Sonne of God: He, that is every where, the same, makes all places alike to his: He makes the fiery furnace a gallery of pleasure, the Lyons denne an house of defence, the Whales belly a lodging chamber, Egypt an harbour.

Hee flees that was able to preferue himselfe from danger, to teach vs, how lawfully we may flee from those dangers, wee cannot auoid otherwise. It is a thanklesse fortitude, to offer our throat vnto the knife: Hee, that came to die for vs, fled for his owne preservation, and hath bid vs follow him; *When they persecute you in one Citie, flee into another*: Wee have but the vse of our liues, and wee are bound to husband them to the best aduantage of God and his Church: God hath made vs, not as Butts to be perpetually shot at, but as the marks of rouers moueable, as the wind and sunne may best serue.

It was warrant enough for *Ioseph* and *Mary* that God commands them to flee, yet so familiar is God growne with his approved seruants, that he gives them the reason of his commanded flight: (*For Herod wil seeke the yong childe to destroy him*.) What wicked men will doe, what they would doe, is knowne vnto God before-hand: He that is so infinitely wise to know the designs of his enemies before they are, could as easily prevent them, that they might not be, but he lets them runne on in their owne courses, that he may fetch glory to himselfe out of their wickednesse.

Good *Ioseph* hauing this charge in the night, stales not till the morning; no sooner had God said *Arise*, then he starts vp and sets forward: It was not diffidence, but obedience that did so hasten his departure; The charge was direct, the busines important: He dares not linger for the light, but breaks his rest for the iourney, and taking vantage of the darke, departs towards Egypt: How knew he this occasion would abide any delay? We cannot be too speedy in the execution of Gods commands, we may be too late: Here was no treasure to hide, no hangings to take downe, no lands to secure; The poore Carpenter needs doe no more but locke the doores, and away: He goes lightly that wants a lode: If there be more pleasure in abundance, there is more security in a meane estate: The Bustard or the Ostridge, when he is pursued, can hardly get vpon his wings, whereas the Lark mounts with ease. The rich hath not so much aduantage of the poore in the enioying, as the poore hath of the rich in leauing.

Now is *Ioseph* come downe into Egypt: Egypt was beholden to the name, as that whence to it did owe no lesse than their vniuersall preservation: Will might it repay this act of Hospitality to that name and bloud: the going down into Egypt had not so much difficulty, as the staying there: Their absence from their countrey was little better than a banishment; but what was this other, than to serue a prentiship in the house of bondage? to be any where saue at home, was likesome; but to be in Egypt so many yeares amongst idolatrous Pagans, most needs be painfull to religious hearts: The Command of their God, and the Presence of Christ makes amends for all: How long should they haue thought it to see the Temple of God, if they had not had the God of the Temple with them? How long to present their sacrifices at the Altar of God, if they had not had him with them, which made all sacrifices accepted, and which did accept the sacrifice of their hearts?

Herod was subtle in mocking the wise-men, whiles he promised to worship him whom he meant to kill; now God makes the wise-men to mocke him, in disappointing his expectation: It is iust with God to punish those, which would beguile others with illusion: Great spirits are so much more impatient of disgrace; How did *Herod* now rage, and fret, and vainely wish to haue met with those false spies, and tells, with what torments he would reuenge their trechery, and curses himselfe for trusting strangers in so important a businesse?

The Tyrants suspicion wold not let him rest long: Ere many daies he sends to inquire of them, whom he sent to inquire of Christ. The notice of their secret departure increaseth his ielousie, & now his anger runnes mad, & his feare proues desperate: All the infants of Bethleem shall bleed for this one; And (that he may make sure worke) he cuts out to himselfe large measures both of time, & place: It was but very lately that the Starre appeared, that the wise-men re-appeared not: They asked for him that was borne, they did not name when he was borne: *Herod* for more securitie ouer-reaches their time, & fetches into the slaughter all the children of two years age: The Priests and Scribes had told him, the towne of Bethleem must be the place of the Messia's nativity: He fetches in all the children of the coasts adioyning; yea his owne shall for the time be a Bethleemite: A tyrannous guiltinesse neuer thinks it selfe safe, but euer seekes to assure it selfe in the excesse of cruelty. Doubtlesse he, which so priuily inquired for Christ, did as secretly brew this massacre: The mothers were set with their children on their laps, feeding them with the brest, or talking to them in the familiar language of their loue, when suddenly the Executioner rushes in, and snatches them from their armes, and at once pulling forth his Commission and his knife, without regard to shrieks or teares, murders the innocent babe, and leaves the passionate mother in a meane betweene madnesse and death. What cursing of *Herod*? what wringing of hands? what condoling? what exclaiming was now in the streets of Bethleem?

O bloody *Herod*, that couldst sacrifice so many harmelesse liues to thine ambition! What could those infants haue done? If it were thy person, whereof thou wert afraid, what likelihood was it, thou couldst liue, till those sucklings might endanger thee? This newes might affect thy successors, it could not concerne thee, if the heate of an impotent & furious enuy had not made thee thirsty of blood: It is not long, that thou shalt enioy this cruelty; After a few hateful yeeres, thy soul shall feel the weight of so many innocents, of so many iust curses.

He, for whose sake thou killedst so many, shall strike thee with death; & then what wouldest thou haue giuen to haue bin as one of those infants whom thou murderedst? In the meane time, when thine executioners returned, and told thee of their vnpartiall dispatch, thou smiledst to thinke, how thou had defeated thy riual, and beguiled the starre, and deluded the prophesies, whiles God in heauen, & his Son on earth laugh thee to scorne, and make thy rage an occasion of further glory to him, whom thou meantest to suppress.

He that could take away the liues of other, cannot protract his owne: *Herod* is now sent home; The coast is cleare for the returne of that holy family; Now God calls them from their exile: Christ and his Mother had not stayed so long out of the confines of the reputed visible Church, but to teach vs continuance vnder the Crosse: Sometimes God sees it good for vs not to sip of the cup of affliction, but to make a diet-drink of it, for constant and common vse: If he allow vs no other liquor for many yeeres, we must take it off cheerefully, and know, that it is but the measure of our betters.

Ioseph & *Mary* stirre not without a command; their departure, stay, remoouall is ordered by the voice of God: If Egypt had bin more tedious vnto them, they durst not moue their foot, till they were biddē: It is good in our own busines to follow reason, or custome: but in Gods busines, if we haue any other guide but himselfe, we presume, & canot expect a blessing.

O the wonderfull-dispensation of God in concealing of himselfe from men! Christ was now some five yeeres old; he beares himselfe as an infant, & knowing all things, neither takes nor giues notice of ought concerning his remoouall & disposing, but appoints that to be done by his Angell, which the Angell could not haue done, but by him: Since he would take our nature, he would be a perfect child, suppressing the manifestation & exercise of that God head, whereto that infant-nature was conioyned. Euen so, O Saviour, the humility of thine infancy was answerable to that of thy birth: The more thou hidest and abasest thy selfe for vs, the more should we magnifie thee, the more should we deiect our selues for thee.

Con-



Contemplations.

THE SECOND BOOKE.

Containing {
Christ among the Doctors.
Christ Baptized.
Christ Tempted.
Simon Called.
The Mariage in Cana.
The good Centurion.

By Ios. HALL, D. of Diuinitie, and Deane
of WORCESTER.



Imprinted at London in the yeare 1628.

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TO THE HONORABLE GENERAL,
SIR EDWARD CECILL KNIGHT,

all honor and happinesse.

Most Honored Sir,

H He store of a good Scribe is (according to our Saviour) both old and new; I would (if I durst) be ambitious of this onely honor; hauing therefore drawne forth those not-frivolous thoughts, out of the old Testament, I fetch these following from the new; God is the same in both; as the body differs not with the age of the sute, with the change of robes: The olde and new wine of holy Truth, came both out of one vineyard; yet here may wee safely say to the Word of his Father, as was said to the Bridegroom of Cana, Thou hast kept the best wine till the last; The authority of both is equally sacred; the use admits no lesse difference, than is betwixt a Saviour fore-shadowed, and come. The intermission of those military imployments, which haue won you iust honor, both in forraine nations, and at home, is in this onely gainesfull, that it yeelds you leasure to these happy thoughts, which shall more fully acquaint you with him that is at once the God of Hosts, & the Prince of Peace: To the furtherance whereof these my poore labours shall doe no thankelesse offices. In lieu of your noble fauours to me both at home, and where you haue merited command, nothing can bee returned but humble acknowledgements, and hearty prayers for the increase of your Honor, and all happinesse to your selfe, and your thrice-worthy and vertuous Lady, by him that is deeply obliged, and truly deuoted to you both,

Ios. HALL.



Contemplations.

THE SECOND BOOKE.

Christ among the Doctors.

When the Spring shewes vs what wee may hope for of the tree in Summer; In his nonage therefore, would our Saviour giue vs a taste of his future prooffe, lest, if his perfection should haue shewed it selfe without warning to the world, it should haue bene entertained with more wonder, than beliefe; now this act of his Childhood shall prepare the faith of men by fore-expectation: notwithstanding all this early demonstration of his diuine graces, the incredulous Iewes could afterwards say, Whence hath this man his wisdom and great works? What would they haue said, if hee had suddenly leapt forth into the cleare light of the world? The Sun would deale all eyes, if he should breake forth at his first rising into his full strength; now he hath both the day-star to goe before him, and to bid men looke for that glorious body, and the lively colours of the day, to publish his approach; the eye is comforted, not hurt by his apperance.

The Parents of Christ went vp yeerely to Ierusalem at the feast of the Pasche; the law was only for the males: I doe not finde the blessed Virgin bound to this voiage, the weaker sex receiued indulgence from God: yet she knowing the spirituall profit of that journey, takes paines voluntarily to measure that long way euery yeare; piety regards not any distinction of sexes or degrees, neither yet doth Gods acceptation, rather doth it please the mercy of the highest more to reward that seruice, which, though he like in all, yet out of fauour he will not impose vpon all. It could not be but that shee whom the holy Ghost ouershaddowed, should be zealous of Gods seruice: those that will goe no further then they are dragged in their religious exercises, are no whit of kin to her whom all generations shall call blessed.

The childe Iesus in the minority of his age, went vp with his Parents to the holy solemnity, not this yeare onely, but in all likelihood others also; hee, in the power of whose Godhead, and by the motion of whose Spirit, all others ascended thither, would not himselfe stay at home. In all his examples he meant our instruction: this pious act of his nonage intended to leade our first yeares into timely deuotion. The first liquor seasons the vessell for a long time after: It is euery way good for a man to beare Gods yoke, euen from his infancy: it is the policie of the Deuill to discourage early holinesse: he that goes out betimes in the morning, is more like to dispatch his journey, then he that lingers till the day be spent. This blessed Family came not to looke at the feast and be gone; but they duly staid out all the appointed dayes of vnleavened bread: they and the rest of Israel could not want household busineses at home; those secular affaires could not either keepe them from repairing to Ierusalem, or send them away immaturrely; Worldly cares must giue place to the sacred: Except wee will depart vnblest, we must attend Gods seruices till we may receiue his dismissal.

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It was the fashion of those times and places, that they went vp, and so returned by troupes, to those set meetings of their holy festiualls. The whole Parish of Nazareth went and came together. Good fellowship doth no way so well, as in the passage to Heauen: much comfort is added by sociery to that iourney, which is of it selfe pleasant; It is an happy word, Come let vs goe vp to the house of the Lord. Mutuall encouragement is none of the least benefits of our holy assemblies: Many sticks laid together, make a good fire, which if they lie single, lose both their light and heat.

The feast ended, what should they doe but returne to Nazareth? Gods seruices may not be so attended, as that wee should neglect our particular callings: Himselfe calls vs from his owne House to ours, and takes pleasure to see a painfull Client: They are fouly mistaken, that thinke God cares for no other trade but deuotion: Piety and diligence must keepe meet changes with each other, neither doth God lesse accept of our returne to Nazareth, then our going vp to Ierusalem:

I cannot thinke that the blessed Virgine, or good *Ioseph*, could be so negligent of their diuine charge, as not to call the childe Iesus to their setting forth from Ierusalem: But their back was no sooner turned vpon the Temple, than his face was towards it; he had businesse in that place, when theirs was ended: there he was both worshipped and represented: He, in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily, could doe nothing without God: his true Father led him away from his supposed: Sometimes the affaires of our ordinary vocation, may not grudge to yeeld vnto spirituall occasions: The Parents of Christ knew him well, to be of a disposition, not strange, nor fullen and stoicall, but sweet and sociable: and therefore they supposed, he had spent the time and the way, in company of their friends and neighbours: They doe not suspect him wandred into the solitary fields: but when euening came, they goe to seeke him among their kinsfolke and acquaintance. If he had not wonted to conuerse formerly with them, hee had not now beene sought amongst them: Neither as God, nor man, doth he take pleasure in a sterne froward austerity, and wilde retirednesse: but in a milde affablenesse, and amiable conuersation.

But, O blessed Virgine, who can expresse the sorrowes of thy perplexed soule, when all that euening search could afford thee no newes of thy Sonne Iesus? Was not this one of those swords of *Simeon*, which should pierce thorow thy tender breast? How didst thou chide thy credulous neglect, in not obseruing so precious a charge, and blame thine eyes, for once looking beside this object of thy loue? How didst thou, with thy carefull husband, spend that restless night, in mutuall expostulations and bemoanings of your losse? How many suspitious imaginations did that while racke thy grieved spirit? Perhaps thou mightest doubt, lest they which laid for him, by *Herods* command, at his birth, had now by the secret instigation of *Archelams*, surprised him in his childhood: or it may be thou thoughtest thy diuine Son had now withdrawn himselfe from the earth, and returned to his heavenly Glory, without warning: or peraduenture thou studiest with thy selfe, whether any carelesnesse on thy behalfe, had not giuen occasion to this absence.

O deare Sauiour who can misse and not mourne for thee? Neuer any soule conceived thee by faith, that was lesse afflicted with the sense of thy desertion, then comforted with the ioy of thy presence: Iust is that sorrow, and those teares seasonsable, that are bestowed vpon thy losse; What comfort are we capable of, whiles we want thee? What relish is there in these earthly delights without thee? What is there to mitigate our passionate discomforts, if not from thee? Let thy selfe loose, O my soule, to the fulnesse of sorrow, when thou findest thy selfe bereaued of him, in whose presence is the fulnesse of ioy, and deny to receiue comfort from any thing saue from his returne.

In vaine is Christ sought among his kindred, according to the flesh: So far are they still from giuing vs their aide, to finde the true *Messias*, that they leade vs from him: Back againe therefore are *Ioseph* and *Mary* gone to seeke him at Ierusalem: She goes about in the City, by the streets and by the open places, & seekes him whom her soule loueth: she sought him for the time, & found him not. Do we thinke she spared her search?

The

The evening of her returne, she haltes to the Inne, where she had left him, where missing him, she inquires of euery one she met, Haue you not seene him, whom my soule loveth? At last, the third day, she findes him in the Temple: One day was spent in the journey towards Galile; another in the returne to Ierusalem: The third day recouers him: He, who would rise againe the third day, and be found amongst the liuing, now also would the third day be found of his Parents, after the sorrow of his absence. But where wert thou, O blessed *Iesu*, for the space of these three dayes? where didst thou bestow thy selfe, or who tended thee, whiles thou wert thus alone at Ierusalem? I know, if Ierusalem should haue beene as vnkinde to thee as Bethleem, thou couldst haue commanded the Heauens to harbour thee, and if men did not minister to thee, thou couldst haue commanded the seruice of Angels; but since the forme of a seruant called thee to a voluntary homelinese, whether it pleased thee to exercise thy selfe thus early with the difficulties of a stranger, or to prouide miraculously for thy selfe, I inquire not, since thou reuealest not, onely this I know, that hereby thou intendedst to teach thy Parents, that thou couldst liue without them, and that not of any indigency, but out of a gracious dispensation, thou wouldest ordinarily depend vpon their care.

In the meane time, thy diuine wisdom could not but fore-know all these corroding thoughts, wherewith the heart of thy deare mother must needs bleed, through this sudden dereliction; yet wouldest thou leaue her for the time to her sorrow: Euen so, O Sauour, thou thoughtest fit to visit her, that bore thee, with this early affliction; Neuer any loued thee, whom thou doest not sometimes exercise with the griefe of missing thee, that both we may be more carefull to hold thee, and more ioyfull in recouering thee. Thou hast said, and canst not lie, I am with you to the end of the world: but euen whiles thou art really present, thou thinkest good to be absent vnto our apprehensions: yet if thou leaue vs, thou wilt not forsake vs; if thou leaue vs for our humiliation, thou wilt not forsake vs to our finall discomfort; thou mayest for three dayes hide thy selfe, but then we shall finde thee in the Temple; None euer sought thee with a sincere desire, of whom thou wert not found: Thou wilt not be either so little absent, as not to whet our appetites, nor so long, as to fainten the heart. After three dayes we shall finde thee; and where should we rather hope to finde thee than in the Temple? There is the habitation for the God of Israel, there is thy resting place for euer; Oh all ye that are grieued with the want of your Sauour, see where you must seeke him: In vaine shall ye hope to finde him in the streets, in the Tauernes, in the Theaters: seeke him in his holy Temple: Seeke him with piety, seeke him with faith, there shall ye meet him, there shall ye recover him. Whiles children of that age were playing in the streets, Christ was found sitting in the Temple, not to gaze on the outward glory of that house, or on the golden Candlestickes, or Tables, but to heare and appose the Doctors; He, who as God, gaue them all the wisdom they had, as the Sonne of man hearkens to the wisdom he had giuen them: He, who sate in their hearts, as the Author of all learning and knowledge, sits in the midst of their schoole, as an humble Disciple: That by learning of them, he might teach all the younger sort humility, and due attendance vpon their Instructours; hee could at the first haue taught the great Rabbins of Israel the deep mysteries of God; but because he was not yet called by his Father, to the publique function of a Teacher, he contents himselfe to heare with diligence, and to aske with modesty, and to teach onely by insinuation. Let those consider this, which will needes run as soone as they can goe: and when they finde ability, thinke they need not stay for a further vocation of God or men. Open your eyes, ye rathe ripe inuaders of Gods Chaire: and see your Sauour in his yonger yeeres, not sitting in the eminent pulpits of the Doctors, but in the lowly floores of the Auditors: See him that could haue taught the Angells, listning in his minority to the voice of men; Who can thinke much to learne of the Ancients when he lookes vpon the Sonne of God, sitting at the feet of the Doctors of Israel? First he heares, then he askes: how much more doth it concerne vs to be hearers, ere we offer to be teachers of others? he gathers that heares, he spends that teacheth; if we spend before we gather, we shall soone proue bankrupts.

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When he hath heard, he askes, and after that, he answers: doubtlesse those very questions were instructions, and meant to teach more than to learne: Neuer had these great Rabbins heard the voice of such a tutor: in whom they might see the wisdom of God so concealing it selfe, that yet it would be knowne to be there: Now maruel then if they all wondred at his vnderstanding and answers: Their eyes saw nothing but humane weaknesse, their eares heard diuine sublimity of matter; betwixt what they saw, and what they heard, they could not but be distracted with a doubting admiration. And why did yee not (O ye Iewish teachers) remember, *That to vs a Childe is borne, and vnto vs a Sonne is giuen, and the gouernment is vpon his shoulder, & his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the euerlasting Father, the Prince of peace?* Why did ye not now bethinke your selues, what the Star, the Sages, the Angels, the Shepheards, *Zachary, Simeon, Anna*, had premonished you? Fruitlesse is the wonder that endeth not in faith; No light is sufficient where the eyes are held through vnbeliefe or preiudice.

The Doctors were not more amazed to heare so profound a childhood, than the parents of Christ were to see him among the Doctors; the ioy of finding him, did strue with the astonishment of finding him thus: And now, not *Ioseph*, (he knew how little right he had to that diuine Sonne) but *Mary* breakes forth into a louing expostulation (*Sonne, why hast thou dealt so with vs?*) that she might not seeme to take vpon her as an imperious Mother, it is like she reserued this question till she had him alone: wherein she meant rather to expresse griefe than correption: Onely herein the blessed Virgin offended, that her inconsideration did not suppose (as it was) that some higher respects, than could be due to flesh and blood, called away the Sonne of God from her, that was the daughter of man. She that was but the mother of humanity, should not haue thought that the businesse of God must for her sake be neglected: We are all partiall to our selues naturally, and prone to the regard of our owne rights; questionlesse this gracious Saint would not for all the world, haue willingly preferred her owne attendance, to that of her God: through heedlesnes she doeth so: her Sonne and Sauour is her monitor, out of his diuine loue reforming her naturall: *How is it that yee sought me? Knew yee not that I must goe about my Fathers businesse?* Immediately before the blessed Virgin had said, *Thy father and I sought thee with heavy hearts*: Wherein both according to the supposition of the world, she called *Ioseph* the Father of Christ, and according to the fashion of a dutifull wife, she names her *Ioseph*, before her selfe. She well knew that *Ioseph* had nothing but a name in this businesse, she knew how God had dignified her beyond him; yet she sayes: *Thy father and I sought thee*; The Sonne of God stands not vpon contradiction to his mother, but leading her thoughts from his supposed father, to his true; from earth to heaven, he answers, (*Knew yee not then I must goe about my Fathers businesse?*) It was honor enough to her, that he had vouchsafed to take flesh of her; It was his eternall honour, that hee was God of God, the euerlasting Sonne of the heauenly Father: good reason therefore was it, that the respects to flesh should giue place to the God of Spirits: How well contented was holy *Mary* with so iust an answer? how doth she now againe in her heart, renew her answer to the Angell, *Behold the seruant of the Lord, be it according to thy word?*

We are all the Sonnes of God in another kind, Nature and the world thinkes wee should attend them; we are not worthy to say; we haue a Father in heauen, if we cannot steale away from these earthly distractions, and imploy our selues in the seruices of our God.

Christ's Baptisme.

Iohn did euery way forerunne Christ, nor so much in the time of his Birth, as in his office; neither was there more vnlikelnesse in their disposition and cariage, then similitude in their function; both did preach and baptize; onely Iohn baptized by himselfe, our Sauour by his Disciples; our Sauour wrought miracles by himselfe, by his Disciples; Iohn wrought none by either; Wherein Christ meant to shew himselfe a Lord, and Iohn a seruant; and Iohn meant to approue himselfe a true seruant to him, whose harbinger he was; he that leapt in the wombe of his mother, when his Sauour (then newly conceived) came in presence, bestird himselfe, when he was brought forth into the light of the Church, to the honor and seruice of his Sauour: he did the same before Christ, which Christ charged his Disciples to doe after him, Preach and Baptize. The Gospell ran alwayes in one tenor, and was neuer but like it selfe; So it became the Word of him in whom there is no shadow by turning, and whose Word it is, *I am Iehoua, I change not.*

It was fit that he which had the Prophets, the starre, the Angell to foretell his coming into the world, should haue his Visier to goe before him, when he would notifie himselfe to the world: Iohn was the voyce of a Cryer: Christ was the Word of his Father; it was fit this Voyce should make a noyse to the world, ere the Word of the Father should speake to it; Iohns note was still, Repentance; The Axe to the root, the Fan to the floore, the Chaffe to the fire; as his raiment was rough, so was his tongue, and if his foode were wilde Hony, his speech was stinging Locusts: Thus must the way be made for Christ in euery heart: Plausibility is no fit preface to regeneration: if the heart of man had continued vpright, God might haue bene entertained without contradiction; but now violence must be offered to our corruption, ere we can haue roome for grace; if the great Way-maker doe not cast downe hills, and raise vp valleys in the bosomes of men, there is no passage for Christ; neuer will Christ come into that soule, where the Herald of repentance hath not bene before him.

That Sauour of ours, who from eternity lay hid in the Counsaile of God, who in the fulnesse of time, so came, that hee lay hid in the wombe of his mother, for the space of forty weekes, after hee was come, thought fit to lye hid in Nazareth, for the space of thirty yeeres, now at last begins to shew himselfe to the world, and comes from Galile to Iordan. He that was God alwayes, and might haue bene perfect man in an instant, would by degrees rise to the perfection both of his Manhood, and execution of his mediator-ship; to teach vs, the necessity of leasure in spirituall proceedings; that many Suns, and successions of seasons, and meanes must be stayed for, ere we can attaine our maturity; and that when we are ripe for the employments, of God, we should no lesse willingly leaue our obscurity, then we took the benefit of it for our preparation. He that was formerly circumcised would now be baptized; what is Baptisme, but an Euangelicall circumcision? What was circumcision, but a legall Baptisme? One both supplied and succeeded the other; yet the Author of both will vndergoe both: He would be circumcised, to sanctifie his Church that was; and baptized, to sanctifie his Church that should be; that so in both Testaments hee might open a way into heaven. There was in him neither filthinesse, nor foreskin of corruption, that should need either knife, or water: He came not to be a Sauour for himselfe, but for vs: we are all vncleannesse, and vncircumcision: he would therefore haue that done to his most pure body, which should be of force to cleare our impure soules: thus making himselfe sinne for vs, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

His Baptisme giues vertue to ours. His last action (or rather passion) was his baptizing with blood: his first was his baptismation with water: both of them wash the world from their sins. Yea, this latter did not onely wash the soules of men, but washeth that

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very water, by which we are washed; from hence is that made both cleane and holy, and can both cleanse and hallow vs; And if the very handkerchiefe which touched his Apostles, had power of cure, how much more that Water, which the sacred body of Christ touched? Christ comes far, to seeke his baptisme: to reach vs (for whose sake hee was baptized) to wait vpon the ordinances of God, and to lue for the fauour of spirituall blessings; They are worthlesse commodities, that are not worth seeking for; it is rarely seene, that God is found of any man vnought for: that desire which onely makes vs capable of good things, can not stand with neglect.

John durst not baptize vnbidden: his Master sent him to doe this seruice, and behold, the Master comes to his seruant, to call for the participation of that priuledge, which he himselfe had instituted, and inioyned; how willingly should we come to our spirituall Superiours, for our part in those mysteries, which God hath left in their keeping; yea, how gladly should we come to that Christ, who giues vs these blessings, who is given to vs in them!

This seemed, too great an honor for the modesty of *John* to receiue; If his mother could say, when her blessed cousin the Virgin *Mary* came to visit her, (*Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*) how much more might he say so, when the diuine Son of that mother came to call for a fauour from him? I haue need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? O holy Baptist, if there were not a greater borne of women then thou; yet thou couldest not be borne of a woman, and not need to be baptized of thy Saviour. Hee baptized with fire, thou with water; Little would thy water haue auailed thee without his fire: If he had not baptized thee, how wert thou sanctified from the wombe? There can be no flesh without filthinesse; neither thy supernaturall conception, nor thy austere life could exempt thee from the need of baptisme: Euen those, that haue not liued to sinne after the similitude of *Adam*, yet are they so rained with *Adam*, that vnlesse the second *Adam* cleanse them by his baptisme, they are hopelesse; There is no lesse vse of baptisme vnto all, then there is certaintie of the need of baptisme; *John* baptized without, Christ within. The more holy a man is, the more sensible he is of his vnholinesse; No carnall man could haue said (*I haue need to be baptized of thee;*) neither can he finde, what hee is the better for a little Font-water. The sense of our wretchednesse, and the valuation of our spirituall helps, is the best tryall of our regeneration: Our Saviour doth not deny, that either *John* hath need to bee baptized of him, or that it is strange, that he should come to be baptized of *John*, but he will needs thus farre, both honour *John*, and disparg himselfe, to be baptized of his Messenger; hee that would take flesh of the Virgin, education from his Parents, sustenance from his creatures, will take baptisme from *John*: It is the prayse of his mercy that he will stoope so low, as to bee beholden to his creatures, which from him receiue their being and power, both to take and giue.

Yet not so much respect to *John*, as obedience to his Father, drew him to this point of humiliation; (*Thus it becomes vs to fulfill all righteousnes.*) The Counsels & Appointments of God are righteousnesse it selfe; There needs no other motiue, either to the seruant, or the Son, then the knowledge of those righteous purposes. This was enough to leade a faithfull man thorow all difficulties, and inconueniences; neither will it admit of any reply, or any demurre: *John* yeeldeth to this honor, which his Saviour puts vpon him, in giuing baptisme to the Author of it: He baptized others to the remission of their sinnes; now he baptizes him, by whom they are remitted both to the Baptizer, and to others.

No sooner is Christ baptized, then hee comes forth of the water: The element is of force, but during the vse: It turnes common, when that is past; neither is the water sooner powred on his head, then the Heauens are opened, and the Holy Ghost descendeth vpon that Head which was baptized: The Heauens are neuer shut whiles either of the Sacraments is duly administred, and receiued: neither doe the Heauens ever thus open, without the descent of the Holy Ghost: But now that the God of Heauen is baptized, they open vnto him; which are opened to all the faithfull by him: and that

Holy

Holy Ghost which proceeded from him, together with the Father, joynds with the Father in a sensible testimony of him, that now the world might see what interest he had in the Heavens, in the Father, in the holy Spirit, and might expect nothing but divine, from the entrance of such a Mediator.



Christ tempted.

NO sooner is Christ come out of the water of Baptisme, than he enters into the fire of temptation: No sooner is the holy Spirit descended upon his head, in the forme of a Dove, than he is led by the Spirit to be tempted. No sooner doth God say, (*This is my Sonne*): than Satan sayes, (*If thou be the Sonne of God*). It is not in the power, either of the gift or scales of Grace, to deliuer vs from the assaults of Satan; they may haue the force to repell euill suggestions, they haue none to preuent them; yea, the more we are ingaged vnto God by our publike vowes, and his pledges of fauour, so much more busie and violent is the rage of that euill one, to encounter vs; We are no sooner stept forth into the field of God, than he labours to wrest our weapons out of our hands, or to turne them against vs.

The voyce from Heauen acknowledged Christ to be the Sonne of God; this diuine Testimony did not allay the malice of Satan, but exasperate it: Now that venomous Serpent swels with inward poison, and hastes to assaile him, whom God hath honoured from Heauen. O God, how should I looke to escape the suggestions of that wicked one, when the Sonne of thy loue cannot be free? when euen grace it selfe drawes on enmity? That enemy, that spared not to strike at the Head, will he forbear the weakest and remotest limme? Arme thou me therefore, with an expectation of that euill I cannot auoid; Make thou me as strong, as he is malicious; Say to my soule also (*Thou art my Sonne*) and let Satan doe his worst.

All the time of our Sauours obscurity, I doe not finde him set vpon; Now, that he lookes forth to the publike execution of his diuine Office, Satan bends his forces against him: Our priuacy, perhaps, may sit downe in peace; but neuer man did endeavour a common good without opposition. It is a signe, that both the worke is holy, and the Agent faithfull, when we meet with strong affronts.

We haue reason to be comforted with nothing so much, as with resistance; If wee were not in a way to doe good, we should finde no rubs; Satan hath no cause to molest his owne, and that whiles they goe about his owne seruice; He desires nothing more, than to make vs smooth paths to sinne; but when we would turne our feet to holinesse, he blocks vp the way with tentations.

Who can wonder enough at the fiercenesse of that bold spirit, that dares to set vpon the Sonne of the euerliuing God? who can wonder enough at thy meeknesse and patience, O Sauour, that wouldst be tempted? He wanted not malice and presumption to assault thee; thou wantedst not humiliry to endure those assaults. I should stand amazed at this voluntary dispensation of thine, but that I see the suscepcion of our humane nature, laies thee open to this condition. It is necessarily incident to manhood to be liable to tentations; Thou wouldest not haue put on flesh, if thou hadst meant vtterly to purge off this consequence of our infirmity; if the state of innocence could haue beene any defence against euill morions, the first Adam had not bene tempted, much less the second. It is not the presenting of tentations that can hurt vs, but the entertaining them; All counsell is the fault of the Giuer, not of the Refuser; We cannot forbid lowd eyes to looke in at our windows, we may shut our dopes against their entrance; It is too lesse for praise to haue resisted, than Satan laboure to suggest euill. Yea, O blessed Saniour, how glorious was it for thee, how happy for vs, that thou wert tempted, and hadst not sin

can tempted thee, how shouldest thou have overcome? Without blowes there can be no victory, no triumph: How had thy power beene manifested, if no aduersary had tried thee? The first *Adam* was tempted and vanquished; the second *Adam*, to repay and repaire that foile, doth vanquish in being tempted. Now haue we not a Saviour, and High Priest, that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but such an one, as was in all things tempted in like sort, yet without sinne; how boldly therefore may we goe vnto the Throne of grace, that we may receiue mercy, and finde grace of helpe in time of need? Yea, this Duell was for vs; Now we see by this conflict of our Almighty Champion, what manner of Aduersary we haue, how he fights, how he is resisted, how overcome. Now our very temptation affords vs comfort, in that we see, the dearer we are vnto God, the more obnoxious we are to this triall; neither can we be discouraged by the hainousnesse of those euils, whereto wee are moued, since we see the Sonne of God solicited to infidelity, couetousnesse, idolatry; How glorious therefore was it for thee O Saviour, how happy for vs that thou wert tempted?

Where then wast thou tempted, O blessed Iesu; or whither wentest thou to meet with our great Aduersary? I doe not see thee led into the market-place, or any other part of the city, or thy home-stead of Nazareth, but into the vast wilderness, the habitation of beasts; a place that carrieth in it, both horror and opportunity; why wouldst thou thus retire thy selfe from men? but as confident Champions are wont to giue aduantage of ground or weapon, to their Antagonist, that the glory of their victory may be the greater: So wouldest thou, O Saviour, in this conflict with our common enemy, yeeld him his owne termes for circumstances, that thine honour and his foile may be the more. Solitarinesse is no small helpe to the speed of a tentation: Woe to him that is alone, for if he fall, there is not a second to lift him vp. Those that out of an affectation of holinesse seeke for solitude in rocks and caues of the deserts, doe no other than run into the mouth of the danger of tentation; whiles they thinke to auoid it. It was enough for thee to whose diuine power the gates of hel were weaknesse, thus to challenge the Prince of darknesse; Our care must be alwaies to eschew all occasions of spirituall danger; and (what we may) to get vs out of the reach of tentations.

But, O the depth of the Wisdome of God! How camest thou, O Saviour, to be thus tempted? That Spirit whereby thou wast conceiued, as man, and which was one with thee and the Father, as God, led thee into the wilderness, to bee tempted of Satan; While thou taughtest vs to pray to thy Father, *Lead vs not into temptation*, thou meantest to instruct vs, that if the same Spirit led vs not into this perilous way, we goe not into it; Wee haue still the same conduct: Let the path bee what it will, how can wee miscary in the hand of a Father? Now may wee say to Satan, as thou didst vnto *Rilate*, *Thou couldst haue no power ouer me, except it were giuen thee from above*; The Spirit led thee, it did not driue thee; here was a sweet inuitation, no compulsion of violence. So absolutely conformable was thy will to thy Deity, as if both thy natures had but one volition; In this first draught of thy bitter portion, thy soule said in a reall subiection, *Not my will, but thy will be done*. We imitate thee, O Saviour, though we cannot reach to thee; All thine are led by thy Spirit: Oh teach vs to forget that we haue wils of our owne. The Spirit led thee; thine inuincible strength did not animate thee into this combat vncalled. What do we weaklings so far presume vpon our abilities, or sucresse, as that we dare thrust our selues vpon temptations vnbidden, vnwarranted? Who can pittie the shipwracke of those Marriners, which will needes put forth, and hoise sailes in a tempest?

Forty dayes did our Saviour spend in the wilderness, fasting, and solitary, all which time was worne out in temptation; how euer the last blunt, because it was most violent, is onely expressed: Now could not the aduersary complaine of disadvantage, whiles he had the full scope both of time and place to doe his worst; And why did it please thee, O Saviour, to fast forty dayes, and forty nights, vnlesse as *Moses* fasted forty dayes at the deliury of the Law, and *Elias* at the restitution of the Law: So thou thoughtest fit at the accomplishment of the Law, and the promulgation of the

the Gospel to fulfil the time of both these Types of thine, wherein thou intendest our wonder, not our imitation; Not our imitation of the time, though of the act. Here were no faulty desires of the flesh in thee, to be tamed, no possibility of a free & more easie assent of the soule to God, that could bee affected of thee, who wast perfectly vnited vnto God; but as for vs thou wouldest suffer death, so for vs thou wouldest suffer hunger, that we might learne by fasting, to prepare our selues for tentations: In fasting so long, thou intendest the manifestation of thy power, in fasting no longer, the truth of thy man-hood, *Moses & Elias*, through the miraculous sustentation of God, fasted so long, without any question made of the truth of their bodies; So long therefore thou thoughtest good to fast, as by the reason of these precedents, might be without preiudice of thine humanitie; which if it should haue pleased thee to support, as thou couldest without meanes, thy very power might haue opened the mouth of cauls against the veritie of thine humane nature; That thou mightest therefore well approue, that there was no difference betwixt thee and vs, but sinne, thou that couldest haue fasted without hunger, and liued without meate; wouldest both feed, and fast, and hunger.

Who can bee discouraged with the scantinesse of friends, or bodily provisions, when hee sees his Sauour thus long destitute of all earthly comforts, both of Societie and sustenance. Oh the policie and malice of that old Serpent, when hee sees Christ bewray some infirmite of nature in being hungry, then hee layes forest at him by temptations; His eye was neuer off from our Sauour, all the time of his sequestration; and now that hee thinke he espies any one part to lye open, hee driues at it with all his might; Wee haue to doe with an Aduersary, no lesse vigilant than malicious, who will bee sure to watch all opportunities of our mischiefe, and where he sees any advantage of weaknesse, will not neglect it. How should wee stand vpon our guard for preuention; that both we may not giue him occasions of our hurt, nor take hurt by those we haue giuen.

When our Sauour was hungrie, Satan tempts him in matter of food; not then, of wealth or glorie; He well knowes both what baits, to fish withall, and when, and how to lay them; How safe and happie shall we be; if we shall bend our greatest care where we discern the most danger?

In euery temptation there is an appearance of good, whether of the bodie, of minde, or estate; The first is the lust of the flesh, in any carnall desire; the second the pride of heart, and life; the third the lust of the eyes: To all these, the first *Adam* is tempted, and in all miscarryed; the second *Adam* is tempted to them all, and overcome: The first man was tempted, to carnall appetite by the forbidden fruit; to pride, by the suggestion of being as God: To couetousnesse, in the ambitious desire of knowing good and euill: Satan hauing found all the motions so successfull with the first *Adam* in his innocent estate, will now tread the same steppes in his temptations of the second; The stones must be made bread, there is the motion to a carnall appetite; The guard and attendance of Angels must bee presumed on, there is a motion to pride; The Kingdomes of the Earth, and the glory of them must be offered, there, to couetousnesse and ambition.

Sathan could not but haue heard God say, *This is my welbeloued Sonne*, hee had heard the Message and the Caroll of the Angels, he saw the Starre, and the iourney, and Offerings, of the Sages, hee could not but take notice of the gratulations of *Zachary, Simeon, Anna*, hee well knew the Predictions of the Prophets, yet now that hee saw Christ fainting with hunger, as not comprehending how infirmities could consist with a God-head, hee can say, (*If thou bee the Sonne of God;*) Had not Sathan knowne that the Sonne of God was to come into the World, he had neuer said (*If thou bee the Sonne of God.*) His very supposition conuinces him: The ground of his temptation, answers it selfe: If therefore Christ seemed to bee a meere man, because after fortie dayes hee was hungry, why was hee not confessed more than a man, in that for fortie dayes hee hungered not? The motiue of the temptation is worse than the

motion, (*If thou bee the Sonne of God*) Sathan could not choole another suggestion of so great importance. All the worke of our Redemption, of our Salvation, depends vpon this one Truth, Christ is the Sonne of God; How should hee else haue ransomed the World, how should hee haue done, how should hee haue suffered that, which was satisfactory to his Fathers wrath? How should his actions, or passion bin valuable to the sinnes of all the World? What maruell is it if wee that are sonnes by Adoption, be assaulted with the doubtles of our interest in God when the naturall Sonne, the Sonne of his Essence is thus tempted? Since all our comfort consists in this point, heere must needs bee laid the chiefe battery; and heere must bee placed our strongest defence.

To turne stones into bread, had bin no more faultie in it selfe, than to turne Water into Wine; But to doe this in a distrust of his Fathers Prouidence, to abuse his power and libertie in doing it, to worke a miracle of Sathans choice, had bene disagreeable to the Sonne of God? There is nothing more ordinary with our spirituall enemy, than by occasion of want to moue vs to vnwarrantable courses; Thou art poore, steale; Thou canst not rise by honest meanes, vse indirect; How easie had it bene for our Sauour, to haue confounded Sathan by the power of his Godhead? But hee rather chuses to vanquish him by the Sword of the Spirit, that hee might teach vs how to resist and ouercome the powers of darknesse? If hee had subdued Sathan by the Almighty power of the Deitie, wee might haue had what to wonder at, not what to imitate: now hee vsesh that weapon which may be familiar vnto vs, that hee may teach our weaknesse how to bee victorious. Nothing in heauen or earth can beate the forces of hell, but the word of God: How carefully should wee furnish our selues with this powerfull munition, how should our hearts and mouthes bee full of it? *Teach mee, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes, O take not from mee the words of Truth, Let them be my Songs in the house of my pilgrimage, So shall I make answer to my Blasphemers.* What needed Christ to haue answered Sathan at all, if it had not bene to teach vs, that temptations must not haue their way; but must be answered by resistance, and resisted by the Word.

I doe not heare our Sauour auerre himselfe to be a God, against the blasphemous insinuation of Sathan; neyther doe I see him working this miraculous Conversion, to proue himselfe the Sonne of God; but most wisely hee takes away the ground of the temptation; Sathan had taken it for granted, that man cannot bee sustayned without bread; and therefore inferres the necessitie of making bread of stones; Our Sauour shewes him from an infallible Word, that hee had mislayed his suggestion; That man liues not by vsuall food only, but by euery word that proceedeth from the mouth of God; Hee can either sustaine without bread, as hee did *Moses* and *Elias*, or with a miraculous bread, as the Israelites with Manna, or send ordinary meanes miraculously, as food to his Prophet by the Rauens, or miraculously multiply ordinary meanes, as the Meale and Oyle to the Sareptan Widdow: All things are sustayned by his Almighty Word: Indeed wee liue by food, but not by any vertue that is without God; without the concurrence of whose Prouidence, bread would rather choak, than nourish vs; Let him withdraw his hand from his creatures, in their greatest abundance wee perish; Why doe we therefore bend our eyes on the meanes, and not looke vp to the hand that giues the blessing.

What so necessary dependance hath the blessing vpon the creature, if our Prayers hold them not together; As wee may not neglect the meanes, so wee may not neglect the procurement of a blessing vpon the meanes, nor bee vnthankfull to the hand that hath given the blessing.

In the first assault Sathan moues Christ to doubt of his Fathers Prouidence, and to vse vnlawfull meanes to help himselfe: in the next, hee moues him to presume vpon his Fathers protection, and the seruice of his blessed Angels; Hee grounds the first vpon a conceit of want; the next of abundance; If hee be in extreames, it is all to one end; to misleade vnto euill: If wee cannot be driuen downe to despayre, he labours

bours to life vs vp to presumption; It is not one foile that can put this bold spirit out of countenance: Temptations like waues, breake one in the necke of another; Whiles wee are in this warfare, wee must make account, that the repulse of one temptation doth but inuite to another.

That blessed Sauiour of ours, that was content to bee led from Iordan into the Wildernesse, for the aduantage of the first temptation, yeelds to bee ledde from the Wildernesse to Ierusalem, for the aduantage of the second; The place doth not a litle anayle to the act, The Wildernesse was fit for a temptation, arising from want, it was not fit for a temptation mouing to vain-glory. The populous Citie was the fittest for such a motion; Ierusalem was the glory of the World, the Temple was the glory of Ierusalem, the Pinacles, the highest peece of the Pinacle, there is Christ content to be set for the opportunitie of temptation: O Sauiour of men, how can wee wonder enough at this humilitie of thine, that thou wouldest so farre abase thy selfe, as to suffer thy pure and sacred Body to bee transported, by the presumptuous and malicious hand of that vnclane Spirit? It was not his power, it was thy patience that deserues our admiration: Neyther can this seeme ouer strange to vs, when wee consider, that if Sathan be the head of wicked men, wicked men are the members of Sathan. What was *Pilate*, or the Iewes that persecuted thine innocencē, but limmes of this Deuill? And why are wee then amazed, to see thee touched, and locally transported by the head, when we see thee yeelding thy selfe ouer, to be crucified by the members? If Sathan did the worse and greater, mediately by their hands, no maruell if hee doe the lesse and easier, immediately by his owne; yet neyther of them without thy volunrary dispensation. Hee could not haue looked at thee, without thee. And if the Sonne of God did thus suffer his owne holy and precious Body to bee carried by Sathan; what wonder is it, if that Enemy haue sometimes power given him, ouer the sinfull bodies of the Adopted sonnes of God? It is not the strength of faith; that can secure vs from the outward violences of that euill one. This difference I finde betwixt his spirituall and bodily assaults: those are beaten backe by the shield of Faith, these admit not of such repulse. As the best man may bee lame, blinde, diseased, so through the permission of God, hee may bee bodily vexed by an old Man-slayer. Grace was neuer given vs for a Target against externall afflictions.

Mee thinkes, I see Christ hoysed vpon the highest battlements of the Temple; whose very roofe was an hundred and thirty Cubits high; and Sathan standing by him, with this speech in his mouth: Well then, since in the matter of nourishment thou wilt needs depend vpon thy Fathers prouidence, that hee can without meanes sustaine thee, take now further tryall of that Prouidence, in thy miraculous preservation; Cast thy selfe downe from this height: Behold, thou art here in Ierusalem, the famous and holy Citie of the World; here thou art, on the top of the pinacle of that Temple, which is dedicated of thy Father, and, if thou bee God, to thy selfe; the eyes of all men are now fixt vpon thee, there cannot bee deuised a more ready way to spread thy glory, and to proclaime thy Deitie, than by casting thy selfe headlong to the Earth. All the World will say, there is more in thee, than a man; and for danger, there can be none; What can hurt him, that is the Sonne of God; and wherefore serues that glorious Guard of Angels, which haue by diuine Commission, taken vpon them the charge of thine humanity? since therefore in one act, thou mayest bee both safe, and celebrated, trust thy father, and those thy seruiceable spirits with thine assured preservation, *Cast thy selfe downe*: And why didst thou not, O thou malignant spirit, endeuour to cast downe my Sauiour, by those same presumptuous hands that brought him vp, since the descent is more easie than the rising vp? was it for that, it had not beene so great an aduantage to thee, that hee should fall by thy meanes, as by his owne? falling into sinne, was more than to fall from the pinacle; still thy care and suite is, to make vs Authors to our selues of euill, thou gainest nothing by our bodily hurt, if the soule bee safe: Or was it rather for

that, thou couldest not? I doubt not, but thy malice could as well haue serued, to haue offered this measure to himselfe; as to his holy Apostle soone after; but hee that bounded thy power, tethers thee shorter; Thou couldest not, thou canst not doe what thou wouldst. He that would permit thee to carrie him vp, binds thy hands from casting him downe: And woe were it for vs if thou wert not euer stinted.

Why did Satan carry vp Christ so high, but on purpose, that his fall might bee the more deadly; so deales hee still with vs, he exalts vs, that wee may bee dangerously abased; Hee puffs them vp with swelling thoughts of their owne worthinesse, that they may bee vile in the eyes of God, and fall into condemnation: It is the manner of God, to cast downe, that hee may raise, to abase that hee may exalt; Contrarily Satan raises vp, that he may throw downe, and intends nothing but our deiection, in our advancement.

Height of place giues opportunity of temptation: Thus busie is that wicked one, in working against the members of Christ. If any of them bee in eminence aboue others, those hee labours most to ruinate; They had need to stand fast, that stand high; Both there is more danger of their falling, and more hurt in their fall.

He that had presumed thus farre, to tempt the Lord of Life, would faine now dare him also to presume vpon his Deitie, *If thou bee the Sonne of God, cast thy selfe downe.* There is not a more tryed shaft in all his quier, than this; a perswasion to men, to beare themselves too bold vpon the fauour of God; Thou art the Elect and Redeemed of G O D; sinne, because grace hath abounded; sinne, that it may abound; Thou art safe enough; though thou offend, bee not too much an aduersarie to thine owne liberty: False spirit, it is no libertie to sinne, but seruitude rather; there is libertie, but in the freedome from sinne; Euery one of vs, that hath the hope of Sonnes, must purge himselfe, euen as hee is pure, that hath redeemed vs: Wee are bought with a price, therefore must wee glorifie God in our bodie and spirits; for they are Gods; Our Sonne-ship teaches vs awe and obedience; and therefore, because wee are Sonnes, wee will not cast our selues downe into sinne.

How idlyly doe Satan and wicked men measure God, by the crooked line of their owne misconceit: Ywis, Christ cannot bee the Sonne of God, vnlesse he cast himselfe downe from the Pinnacle; vnlesse hee come downe from the Crosse. God is not mercifull vnlesse he honour them in all their desires; not iust, vnlesse hee take speedie vengeance, where they require it; But when they haue spent their folly vpon these vaine imaginations, Christ is the Sonne of God, though hee stay on the toppe of the Temple, God will be mercifull, though wee mis-cary, and iust though sinners seeme lawlesse. Neither will hee bee any other, than hee is: or measured by any rule but himselfe.

But what is this I see, Satan himselfe with a Bible vnder his arme, with a Text in his mouth, *It is written, Hee shall giue his Angels charge ouer thee?* How still in that wicked One doth subtilty strue with Presumption? Who could not, butouer-wonder at this, if hee did not consider, that since the Deuill dare to touch the sacred Body of Christ with his hand, hee may well touch the Scriptures of God with his tongue? Let no man henceforth maruell, to heare Heretikes or Hypocrites, quote Scriptures, when Satan himselfe hath not spared to cite them; what are they the worse for this, more than that holy Body, which is transported? Some haue bene poysoned by their meates and drinckes, yet either these nourish vs, or nothing: It is not the Letter of the Scripture that can carry it, but the Sense, if wee diuide these two, wee prophane and abuse that word wee alledge. And wherefore doth this foule spirit vrge a Text, but for imitation, for preuention, and for successe? Christ had alledged a Scripture vnto him, hee re-alleges Scripture vnto Christ: At leastwise, hee will counterfeit an imitation of the Sonne of God; Neither is it in this alone, what one act euer passed the Hand of God, which Satan did not apishly attempt to second? If wee follow Christ in the outward action, with contrary intentions, wee follow Satan, in following Christ. Or, perhaps, Satan meant to make

Christ

Christ hereby weary of this weapon; As wee see fashions, when they are taken vp of the Vnworthy, are cast off by the Great; It was, doubtlesse, one cause, why Christ after ward forbad the Deuill euen to confesse the Truth, because his mouth was a slander. But chiefly doth he this, for a better colour of his temptation: He gilds ouer this false metall with Scripture, that it may passe current: Euen now is Satan transformed into an Angel of light, and will seeme godly for a mischief: If Hypocrites make a fayre shew to deceiue with a glorious lustre of holinesse, wee see whence they borrowed it: How many thousand soules are betrayed by the abuse of that word, whose vse is soueraigne and sauing. No Deuill is so dangerous as the religious Deuill: If good meate turne to the nourishment, not of nature, but of the disease, wee may not forbear to feed, but indeauour to purge the body of those euill humours, which cause the stomach to worke against it selfe: O GOD, thou that hast giuen vs light, giue vs cleare and sound eyes, that we may take comfort of that light thou hast giuen vs: Thy Word is tidly, make our hearts so, and then shall they finde that Word, not more true than cordiall; Let not this diuine Table of thine, be made a soare to our soules.

What can be a better act than to speake Scripture? It were a wonder if Satan should doe a good thing well; He cites Scripture then, but with mutilation, and distortion; it comes not out of his mouth, but maymed and peruered: One peece is left, all misapplied: Those that wrest or mangle Scripture for their owne turne, it is easie to see from what Schoole they come. Let vs take the word from the Authour, not from the Vsurper: *David* would not doubt to eate that sheepe, which he pulled out of the mouth of the Beare or Lyon; (*Hee shall giue his Angels charge ouer thee*;) Oh comfortable assurance of our protection; Gods children neuer goe vnattended: Like vnto great Princes wee walke euer in the midst of our guard, though inuisible, yet true, carefull, powerfull; What creatures are so glorious as the Angels of heauen, yet their Maker hath set them to serue vs: Our adoption makes vs at once great and safe: Wee may be contemptible and ignominious in the eyes of the world, but the Angels of GOD obserue vs the while, and scorne not to waite vpon vs in our homeliest occasions: The Sunne, or the light may wee keepe out of our houses, the aire we cannot; much lesse these Spirits, that are more simple and immateriall: No wals, no bolts can seuer them from our sides; they accompany vs in dungeons, they goe with vs into our exile: How can we either feare danger, or complaine of solitarinesse, whiles wee haue so vnseparable, so glorious Companions?

Is our Sauiour distasted with Scripture, because Satan mislayes it in his dish? Doth he not rather snatch this sword out of that impure hand, and beat Satan with the weapon which he abuseth: (*It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*;) The Scripture is one, as that God, whose it is: Where it carryes an appearance of difficultie or inconuenience, it needes no light to cleare it, but that which it hath in it selfe. All doubts that may arise from it, are fully answered by collation: It is true that God hath taken this care, and giuen this charge of his owne: he will haue them kept, not in their sinnes: they may trust him; they may not tempt him: hee meant to incourage their faith, not their presumption. To cast our selues vpon any immediate prouidence, when meanes faile not, is to disobey, in stead of beleeuing God; we may challenge God on his Word, wee may not straine him beyond it; wee may make account of what hee promised, we may not subiect his promises to vniust examinations: and where no need is, make triall of his Power, Iustice, Mercy, by deuises of our owne. All the Deuils in hell, could not elude the force of this diuine answer: and now Satan sees how vainely he tempteth Christ to tempt God.

Yet againe for all this, doe I see him setting vpon the Sonne of GOD: Satan is not foyled when he is resisted: neither diffidence, nor presumption can fasten vpon Christ, he shall be tryed with honour; As some expert Fencer that challenges at all weapons, so doth his great enemy; in vaine shall we plead our skill in some, if wee faile in any; It must be our wisdome to be prepared for all kind of assaults: As those
that

that hold Townes and Forts doe, not onely defend themselves from incurfions, but from the Cannon and the Pioner, still doth that subtil Serpent trauerse his ground for an aduantage: The Temple is not high enough for his next tentation; He therefore carries vp Christ to the top of an exceeding high mountaine: All enemies in pitch fields strue for the benefit of the Hill, or Riuer, or Winde, or Sunne; That which his seruant *Balac* did by his instigation, himselfe doth now immediately, change places in hope of preuailing. If the obscure Countrie will not moue vs, hee tries what the Court can doe; if not our home, the Tauerne; if not the field, our closet: As no place is left free by his malice, so no place must be made preiudiciall by our carelesnesse; and as we should alwayes warch ouer our selues, so then most, when the opportunitie caries cause of suspicion.

Wherefore is Christ caried vp so high but for prospect? If the Kingdomes of the earth and their glorie were onely to be presented to his imagination, the valley would haue serued; If to the outward sense, no hill could suffice: Circular bodies though small, cannot bee seene at once. This show was made to both, diuers kingdomes lying round about Iudea were represented to the eie, the glory of them to the imagination: Satan meant the eye could tempt the fancy, no lesse then the fancy could tempt the will. How many thousand soules haue died of the wound of the eye; If we do not let in sinne at the window of the eye, or the doore of the eare, it cannot enter into our hearts.

If there be any pompe, maiestie, pleasure, brauery in the world, where should it be but in the Courts of Princes, whom God hath made his Images, his deputies on earth? There is soft rayment, sumptuous feasts, rich Jewels, honourable attendance, glorious triumphs, royall state, these Satan layes out to the fairest show: But Oh, the craft of that old Serpent: Many a care attends greatnesse: No Crowne is without thornes: High seats are neuer but vneasie; all those infinite discontentments which are the shadow of earthly Soueraigntie, he hides out of the way; nothing may bee seene, but what may both please and allure. Satan is still & ever like himselfe; If tentations might be but turnd about and showne on both sides, the kingdome of darkenesse would not be so populous. Now whensoever the Tempter sets vpon any poore soule, all sting of conscience, wrath, iudgement, torment is concealed, as if they were not; Nothing may appeare to the eye but pleasure, profit, and a seeming happinesse in the enioying our desires; those other wofull obiects are reserued for the farewell of sinne; that our misery may be seene and felt at once. When we are once sure, Satan is a Tyrant, till then, he is a Parasite: There can be no safety, if we doe not view as well the backe as the face of tentations.

But oh presumption and impudence, that Hell it selfe may be asham'd of; The Diuell dares say to Christ, *All these will I giue thee, if thou wilt fall downe and worship me*: That beggerly spirit, that hath not an inch of earth, can offer the whole world to the maker, to the owner of it: The slaue of God, would be adored of his Creator: How can we hope he should be sparing of false boasts, and of vnreasonable promises vnto vs, when he dares offer kingdomes to him by whom Kings reigne?

Tentations on the right hand are most dangerous; how many that haue beene hardened with feare, haue melted with honor; There is no doubt of that soule that will not bite at the golden hooke.

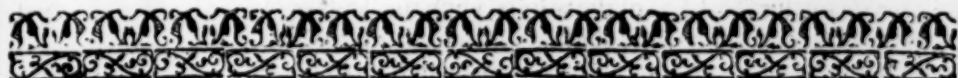
False liers and vaine-glorious boasters see the top of their pedigree: If I may not rather say, that Satan doth borrow the vse of their tongues for a time; Whereas faithfull is he that hath promised, who will also doe it. Fidelity and truth is the issue of heauen.

If Idolatry were not a deare sinne to Satan, hee would not be so importunate to compasse it; It is miserable to see how he drawes the world insensibly into this sinne, which they professe to detest: Those that would rather hazard the furnace, then worship Gold in a statue, yet doe adore it in the stampe, and finde no fault with themselves. If our hearts be drawne to stoope vnto an ouer high respect of any creature, wee are Idolaters. O GOD, it is no maruell if thy ieaousie be kindled at the admission

admission of any of thine own workes, into a competition of honour with their Creator.

Neuer did our Saviour say, *Avoid Satan*, till now; It is a iust indignation, that is conceiued at the motion of a riuallitie with God; Neither yet did Christ exercise his diuine power in this command, but by the necessary force of Scripture, driues away that impure Tempter; *It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, & him onely shalt thou serue*: The rest of our Saviours answers were more full and direct, then that they could admit of a replie, but this was so flat and absolute, that it vtterly daunted the courage of Satan, and put him to a shamefull flight, and made him for the time, weary of his trade.

The way to be rid of the troublesome solicitations of that wicked one, is continued resistance. He that forcibly droue the tempter from himselfe, takes him off from vs, and will not abide his assaults perpetuall: It is our exercise and triall, that he intends, not our confusion.



SIMON called.



As the Sunne in his first rising, drawes all eyes to it; So did this Sun of righteousness, when he first shone forth into the world; His miraculous cures drew Patients, his diuine doctrine drew Auditors, both together drew the admiring multitude by troopes after him. And why doe we not still follow thee, O Saviour, thorow deserts and mountaines, ouer land and Seas, that we may be both healed, and taught. It was thy word, that when thou wert lift vp, thou wouldest draw all men vnto thee: Behold, thou art lift vp long since, both to the tree of shame, and to the throne of heavenly glory, *Draw vs, and we shall runne after thee*: Thy word is still the same, though proclaimed by men, thy vertue is still the same, though exercised vpon the spirits of men; Oh giue vs, to hunger after both, that by both our soules may be satisfied.

I see the people not onely following Christ, but pressing vpon him; euen very vnmanerlinesse findes here both excuse, and acceptation; they did not keepe their distances in an awe to the Maiestie of the speaker, whiles they were rauished with the power of the speech, yet did not our Saviour checke their vnreuerent thronging, but rather encourages their forwardnesse. Wee cannot offend thee, O GOD, with the importunitie of our desires; It likes thee well, that the Kingdome of heauen should suffer violence, Our slacknesse doth euer displease thee, neuer our vehemency.

The throng of Auditors forced Christ to leaue the shore, and to make *Peters* ship his pulpet: Neuer were there such nets cast out of that fisher-boate before: whiles he was vpon the land, he healed the sicke bodies by his touch; now that he was vpon the Sea, hee cured the sicke soules by his doctrine; and is purposely seuered from the multitude, that he may ynite them to him. He that made both Sea and land, causeth both of them to conspire to the opportunities of doing good.

Simon was busie, washing his nets: Euen those nets that caught no thing, must bee washed, no lesse then if they had sped well: The nights toyle doth not excuse his daies worke: Little did *Simon* thinke of leauing those nets, which hee so carefully washed, and now Christ interrupts him with the fauour and blessing of his gracious presence: Labour in our calling (how homely soeuer) makes vs capable of diuine benediction. The honest fisher-man, when hee saw the people flocke after Christ, and heard him speake with such power, could not but conceiue a generall and confusd apprehension of

of some excellent worth in such a Teacher, and therefore is glad to honor his ship with such a guest; and is first Christs host by sea, ere he is his Disciple by land: An humble and seruiceable entertainment of a Prophet of God, was a good foundation of his future honour; He that would so easily lend Christ his hand, and his shippe, was likely soone after to bestow himselfe vpon his Sauour.

Simon hath no sooner done this seruice to Christ, then Christ is preparing for his reward; when the Sermon is ended, the ship-roome shall bee paid for abundantly; Neither shall the Host expect any other pay-master then himselfe: *Lanch forth into the deepe, and let downe your Nets to make a draught*: That ship which lent Christ an opportunity of catching men vpon the shore, shall be requited with a plentiful draught of fish in the deepe: It had beene as easie for our Sauour, to haue brought the fish to *Peters* ship, close to the shore, yet as chusing rather to haue the ship carried to the shole of fish, he bids (*Lanch forth into the deepe*:) In his miracles, he loues ever to meete nature in her bounds; and when she hath done her best, to supply the rest by his ouer-ruling power; The same power therefore, that could haue cauled the fishes to leape vpon drie land, or to leaue themselues forsaken of the waters, vpon the sands of the Lake, will rather finde them in a place naturall to their abiding (*Lanch out into the deepe*.)

Rather in a desire to gratifie and obey his guest, then to pleasure himselfe, will *Simon* bestow one cast of his net; Had Christ inioyned him an harder taske, hee had not refused; yet not without an allegation of the valikelihood of successe, (*Master we haue trauailed all night, and caught nothing; yet at thy word I will let downe the Net*.) The night was the fittest time for the hopes of their trade; not vniustly might *Simon* misdoubt his speed by day, when he had worne out the night in vnprofitable labor: Sometimes God crosseth the fairest of our expectations, and giues a blessing to those times and meanes whereof we despayre. That paines cannot be cast away, which wee resolute to lose for Christ. Oh God, how many doe I see casting out their Nets in the great Lake of the world, which in the whole night of their life haue caught nothing: They conceiue mischief and bring forth iniquitie; They hatch Cockatrice egges, and weaue the Spiders web; he that eateth of their egges dieth, and that which is trodden vpon, breaketh out into a Serpent; Their webs shall bee no garment, neither shall they couer themselues with their labours.

Oh yee sonnes of men how long will yee loue vanitie and follow after lyes? Yet if we haue thus vainely mispent the time of our darkenesse; Let vs at the command of Christ, cast out our new-washen nets; our humble and penitent obedience, shall come home laden with blessings, (*And when they had so done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, so that their Net brake*:) What a difference there is betwixt our owne voluntary acts, and those that are done vpon command; not more in the grounds of them, then in the issue; those are oft-times fruitlesse, these ever successefull: Neuer man threw out his Net at the word of his Sauour, and drew it backe empty; who would not obey thee, O Christ, since thou dost so bountifullly requite our weakest seruices? It was not meere retribution that was intended in this euent, but instruction also: This act was not without a myserie: He that should bee made a fisher of men, shall in this draught foresee his successe; the kingdome of heauen is like a draw-net, cast into the Sea, which when it is full, men draw to land: The very first draught that *Peter* made after the complement of his Apostleship, inclosed no lesse then three thousand soules. O powerfull Gospell, that can fetch sinfull men from out of the depths of naturall corruption: Oh happie soules, that from the blinde and muddy cels of our wicked nature, are drawne forth to the glorious libertie of the sonnes of God! *Sims* Net breakes with the store; abundance is sometimes no lesse troublesome than want; the Net should haue held, if Christ had not meant to ouer-charge *Simon* both with blessing and admiration: How happily is that Net broken, whose rupture drawes the fisher to Christ: Though the net brake, yet the fish escaped not: He that brought them thither to be taken, held them there till they were taken, (*They beckned to their partners in the other ship, that they should come and helpe them*:) There are other ships in partnership with *Peter*, hee doth not fish all the Lake

Lake alone : There cannot be a better improuement of society, then to helpe vs gaine, to relieue vs in our profitable labours; to draw vp the spirituall draught into the vessel of Christ, and his Church : wherefore hath God giuen vs partners, but that wee should becken to them for their aide in our necessary occasions ? Neither doth *Simon* slacken his hand, because he had assistants. What shall wee say to those lazie fishers, who can set others to the Drag, whilst themselves looke on at ease; caring onely to feede themselves with the fish; not willing to wet their hands with the Net ? What shall we say to this excesse of gaine ? The Nets break, the ships sinke with their burden : Oh happie complaint of too large a capture ! O Sauour, if those Apostolicall vessels of thy first rigging, were thus ouer-laide, ours flote and totter with a ballasted lightnes : Thou, who art no lesse present in these bottomes of ours, laide them with an equall freight of conuerted soules, and let vs praise thee for thus sinking.

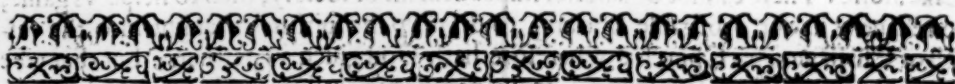
Simon was a skillfull Fisher, and knew well the depth of his trade, and now perceiving more then Art or nature in this draught, he falls downe at the knees of *Iesus*, saying, (*Lord, goe from me, for I am a sinfull man.*) Himselfe is caught in this Net : He doth not greedily fall vpon so vnexpected and profitable a boory, but he turnes his eyes from the draught to himselfe, from the act to the Author, acknowledging vilenesse in the one, in the other Maiestie : (*Goe from me Lord, for I am a sinfull man.*)

It had beene pitie the honest Fisher-man should haue beene taken at his Word : Oh *Simon*, thy Sauour is come into thine owne ship to call thee, to call others by thee vnto blessednesse, and doest thou say, *Lord goe from me* ? As if the patient should say to the Physitian : Depart from me, for I am sicke. It was the voice of astonishment, nor of dislike; the voice of humility, not of discontentment : yea, because thou art a sinfull man, therefore hath thy Sauour need to come to thee, to stay with thee; and because thou art humble in the acknowledgement of thy sinfulness, therefore Christ delights to abide with thee, and will call thee to abide with him : No man euer feared the worse for abasing himselfe to his God : Christ hath left many a soule, for froward and ynkind vsage, neuer any for the disparagement of ir selfe, & intreaties of humility. *Simon* could not deuise how to hold Christ faster, that by thus suing to him, to be gone, then by thus pleading his vnworthinesse.

O my soule be not weary of complaining of thine owne wretchednesse, disgrace thy selfe to him that knowes thy vilenesse; be astonished at those mercies which haue shamed thine ill deseruings : Thy Sauour hath no power to goe away from a prostrate heart : Hee that resists the proud, heartens the lowly (*Fear not, for I will make thee hence-forth a Fisher of men.*) Lo, this Humilitie is rewarded with an Apostleship : What had the Earth euer more glorious, then a Legacy from Heauen ? Hee that bade Christ goe from him, shall haue the honour to goe first on this happy errand : This was a Trade that *Simon* had no skill of : it could not but be enough to him, that Christ said, *I will make thee*; the miracle shewed him able to make good his word; he that hath power to command the Fishes to be taken, can easily inable the hands to take them.

What is this diuine Trade of ours then, but a spirituall Piscation ? The World is a Sea, Soules like fishes swim at libertie in this Deepe, the Nets of wholesome Doctrine, draw vp some to the shore of Grace and Glory : How much skill, and toyle, and patience, is requisite in this Art ? Who is sufficient for these things ? This Sea, these Nets, the Fishers, the Fish, the Vessels are all thine, O GOD; doe what thou wilt in vs, and by vs : Giue vs ability and grace to take, giue men will and grace to be taken, and take thou glory by that which thou hast giuen.

The



The marriage in Cana.



As this then thy first miracle, O Saviour, that thou wroughtst in Cana of Galilee? And could there be a greater miracle then this, that having beene thirty yeares vpon earth, thou didst no miracle till now? That thy diuinitie did hide it selfe thus long in flesh; that so long thou wouldest lye obscure in a corner of Galilee, vnkowne to that world thou camest to redeeme? That so long thou wouldest straine the patient expectation of those, who euer since thy Starre, waited vpon the reuelation of a Messias? We silly wretches if wee haue but a dram of vertue, are ready to set it out to the best shew; thou who receiuedst not the Spirit by measure, wouldest content thy selfe with a willing obscurity, and concealedst that power that made the world, in the rooſe of an humane brest, in a cottage of Nazareth. O Saviour, none of thy miracles is more worthy of astonishment, then thy not doing of miracles. What thou didst in priuate, thy wisdom thought fit for secrecy; but if thy blessed Mother had not beene acquainted with some domestically wonders, shee had not now expected a miracle abroad. The Starres are not seene by day; the Sunne it selfe is not seene by night: As it is no small art to hide Art, so is it no small glory to conceal glory: Thy first publike miracle graceth a mariage: It is an ancient and laudable institution that the Rights of matrimonie should not want a sollemne celebration; When are feasts in season, if not at the recovery of our lost ribbe? If not at this mayne change of our estate, wherein the ioy of obſeyning, meets with the hope of further comforts? The Sonne of the Virgin, and the Mother of that Sonne are both at a wedding: It was in all likelihood some of their kindred, to whose nuptiall feast they were invited so far; yet was it more the honour of the act, then of the person, that Christ intended: He that made the first marriage in Paradise, bestowes his first miracle vpon a Galilean marriage: He that was the Author of matrimonie and sanctified it, doth by his holy presence, honest the resemblance of his eternall vnion with his Church: How holdly may we spit in the faces of all the impure Aduersaries of wedlocke, when the Sonne of God pleases to honour it?

The glorious Bride-groome of the Church, knew well how ready men would bee to place shame, euen in the most lawfull conjunctions; and therefore his first worke shall be to countenance his own Ordinance. Happy is that wedding, where Christ is a guest; O Saviour, those that marry in thee, cannot marry without thee: There is no holy Marriage whereat thou art not (how euer invisible) yet truly present, by thy Spirit, by thy gracious benediction: Thou makest marriages in heauen; thou blest them from heauen. Oh thou, that hast betrothed vs to thy selfe in Truth and Righteousnesse, doe thou consummate that happy marriage of ours in the highest heauens.

It was no rich or sumptuous Bridall, to which Christ, with his mother, and Disciples vouchsafed to come, from the further parts of Galilee: I finde him not at the magnificent feasts or triumphs of the Great; the proud pompe of the World did not agree with the state of a seruant: This poore, needy Bride-groome wants drinke for his guests. The blessed Virgin (though a stranger to the house) out of a charitable compassion, and a friendly desire, to maintaine the decencie of an Hospitall entertaynement, inquires into the wants of her Host: pitties them, bemoanes them, where there was power of redresse, (*When the wine failed, the mother of Iesus said vnto him, They haue no wine.*) How well doth it beſeeme the eyes of piety and Christian loue, to looke into the necessities of others? Shee that conceived the God of mercies, both in her heart and in her wombe, doth not fixe her eyes vpon her owne

owne teacher, but searcheth into the penurie of a poore Israelite, and feeles those wants, whereto he complaines not: They are made for themselves, whose thoughts are onely taken vp with their owne store, or indigence.

There was wine enough for a meale, though not for a feast: and if there were not wine enough, there was enough water; yet the holy Virgin complaines of the want of wine, and is troubled with the very lacke of superfluitie: The bountie of our God reaches not to our life onely, but to our contentment; neither hath hee thought good to allow vs onely the bread of sufficiency, but sometimes of pleasure. One while that is but necessary, which some other time were superfluous. It is a scrupulous iniustice to scant our selues, where God hath bene liberall.

To whom should wee complaine of any want, but to the Maker and Giuer of all things? The blessed Virgin knew to whom shee sued; Shee had good reason to know the diuine nature and power of her Sonne: Perhaps the Bride-groome was not so needie, but if not by his purse, yet by his credit, hee might haue supplied that want, or, it were hard if some of the neighbour-guests (had they bene duely sollicitied) might not haue furnished him with so much wine, as might suffice for the last seruice of a dinner; but blessed *Mary* knew a nearer way, shee did not thinke best to lade at the shallow Channell, but runnes rather to the Well-head, where shee may dip, and fill the Firkins at once with ease. It may bee shee saw that the trayne of Christ (which vnbidden followed vnto that feast, and vnexpectedly added to the number of the guests) might helpe forward that defect, and therefore shee iustly sollicites her Sonne *Iesus* for a supply. Whether wee want Bread, or Water, or Wine, necessities or comforts, whether should wee runne, O Sauiour, but to that infinite munificence of thine, which neither denyeth, nor vpbraiderth any thing? Wee cannot want, wee cannot abound, but from thee; Giue vs what thou wilt, so thou giue vs contentment with what thou giuest.

But what is this I heare? A sharpe answer to the suite of a Mother? (*Oh woman, what haue I to doe with thee?*) He whose sweet mildnesse and mercy, neuer sent away any suppliant discontented, doth he onely frowne vpon her that bare him? He that commands vs to honour Father and Mother, doth he disdayne her whose flesh hee tooke? God forbid: Loue and duerie doth not exempt Parents from due admonition. Shee sollicitied Christ as a Mother, he answers her as a Woman: If shee were the Mother of his flesh, his Deitie was eternall: Shee might not so remember her selfe to be a Mother, that shee should forget she was a Woman; nor so looke vpon him as a Sonne, that shee should not regard him as a God: He was so obedient to her as a Mother, that withall she must obey him as her God; That part which he tooke from her shall obserue her; Shee must obserue that Nature which came from aboue, and made her both a Woman and a Mother. Matter of miracle concerned the Godhead onely? Supernaturall things were aboue the sphere of fleshly relation: If now the blessed Virgin wil be prescribing, either time or forme vnto diuine acts, *O Woman, What haue I to doe with thee, my house is not come.* In all bodily actions his style was, *O Mother*: In spirituall and heauenly, *O Woman*. Neither is it for vs in the holy affaires of God, to know any faces, yea, if we haue known Christ heretofore according to the flesh, henceforth know wee him so no more.

O blessed Virgin, if in that heauenly glory wherein thou art, thou canst take notice of these earthly things, with what indignation doest thou looke vpon the presumptuous superstition of vaine men, whose suits make thee more than a solicitor of diuine fauours? Thy humanitie is not lost in thy Motherhood, nor in thy Glory: The respects of Nature reach not so high as heauen; It is farre from thee to abide that honour which is holne from thy Redeemer.

There is a marriage, whereto wee are inuited; yea, whereto wee are already interested, not as the Guests onely, but as the Bride; in which there shall bee no want of the wine of gladnesse: It is maruell, if in these earthly banquets there bee nor some

lacke: In thy presence, O Sauour, there is fulnesse of ioy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for euermore. Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lambe.

Euen in that rough answer, doth the blessed Virgin desery cause of hope. If his houre were not yet come, it was therefore comming; when the expectation of the ghests, and the necessitie of the occasion had made fit roome for the miracle, it shall come forth and challenge their wonder. Faithfully therefore and obseruantly, doth she turne her speech from her Sonne to the Wayters, (*Whatsoener hee saith vnto you, doe it.*) How well doth it befeeme the Mother of Christ to agree with his Father in heaven, whose voice from heauen, said, *This is my well beloued Sonne, heare him*: Shee that said of her selfe, *Be it vnto me according to thy Word*; saies vnto others, *Whatsoener hee saith to you, doe it*, This is the way to haue miracles wrought in vs, obedience to his Word. The power of Christ did not stand vpon their officiousnesse; hee could haue wrought wonders in spite of them, but their peruerse refusall of his commands, might haue made them vncapable of the fauour of a miraculous action: He that can (when he will) conuince the obstinate, will not grace the disobedient. Hee that could worke without vs, or against vs, will not worke for vs, but by vs.

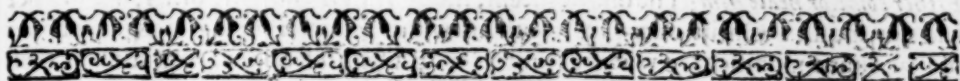
This very poore house was furnished with many and large vessels, for outward purification; As if sinne had dwelt vpon the skin, that superstitious people sought holinesse in frequent washings; Euen this rinsing fouled them, with the vncleannesse of a traditionall will-worship. It is the soule which needs scowring; and nothing can wash that, but the blood, which they desperately wished vpon themselves and their children, for guilt, not for expiation. Purge thou vs, O Lord, with hyssop, and we shall be cleane; wash vs, and we shall be whiter than snow.

The Wayters could not but thinke strange of so vnseasonable a command; (*Fill the water-pots.*) It is wine that we want, what doe we goe to fetch water? Doth this holy man meane thus to quench our thirst, and coole our stomachs? If there bee no remedie, we could haue sought this supply vnbidden, yet so farre hath the charge of Christs Mother preuailed, that in steade of carrying flagons of wine to the table, they goe to fetch pailles full of water, from the Cisternes. It is no pleading of vnlikelyhoods against the command of an Almighty power.

Hee that could haue created wine immediately in those vessels, will rather turne water into wine; In all the course of his miracles, I doe neuer finde him making ought of nothing, all his great workes are grounded vpon former existences, hee multiplied the bread, he changed the water, he restored the withered limmes, he rayled the dead; and still wrought vpon that which was, and did not make that which was not: What doth he in the ordinarie way of nature, but turne the watery ioyce that arises vp from the roote into wine; he will onely doe this now suddenly, and at once, which he doth usually by sensible degrees. It is euer duely obserued by the Sonne of God, not to doe more miracle than he needs.

How liberall are the prouisions of Christ? If hee had turned but one of those vessels, it had beene a iust prooffe of his power, and perhaps that quantitie had serued the present necessitie; now he furnisheth them with so much wine, as would haue serued an hundred and fiftie ghests for an intire feast; Euen the measure magnifies at once, both his power and mercy. The munificent hand of God regards not our need onely, but our honest affluence. It is our sinne and our shame, if wee turne his fauour into wantonnesse. There must be first a filling, ere there bee a drawing out: Thus, in our vessels, the first care must be of our receit; the next, of our expence: God would haue vs Cisternes, not Channels. Our Sauour would not bee his owne taster, but hee sends the first draught to the Governour of the feast. Hee knew this owne power, they did not; Neither would hee heare witnesse of himselfe, but fetch it out of others mouthes; They that knew not the originall of that wine, yet prayed for the taste; (*Every man at the beginning, doth see forth good wine, and when men haue well drunke, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until*

untill now,) The same bounty, that expressed it selfe in the quantitie of the Wine, shewes it selfe no lesse in the excellence: Nothing can fall from that diuine hand not exquisite: That liberalitie hated to provide crab-wine for his guests. It was fit, that the miraculous effects of Christ, (which came from his immediate hand) should bee more perfect, than the naturall. O blessed Sauour, how delicate is that new Wine, which wee shall one day drinke with thee, in thy Fathers Kingdome: Thou shalt turne this water of our earthly affliction, into that Wine of gladnesse, wherewith our soules shall be satiate for euer. Make haste, O my Beloued, and bee thou like to a Roe, or to a yong Hart vpon the Mountaine of Spices.



The good Centurion.



VEN the bloody trade of Warre yeelded worthy Clients to Christ: This Romane Captaine had learned to beleue in that *Iesus*, whom many Iewes despised: No Nation, no Trade, can shut out a good heart from God: If he were a Forreiner for birth; yet hee was a Domestick in heart; Hee could not change his blood, hee could ouer-rule his affections: he loued that Nation, which was chosen of God, and if he were not of the Synagogue, yet hee built a Synagogue; where hee might not bee a Partie, hee would bee a Benefactor: Next to being good, is a fauouring of goodnesse: We could not loue Religion, if wee vtterly want it. How many true Iewes were not so zealous? Either will, or ability lacked in them, whom duty more obliged; Good affections doe many times more than supply nature; Neither doth God regard whence, but what wee are: I doe not see this Centurion come to Christ, as the Israelitish Captaine came to *Elias* in Carmel, but with his Cap in his hand, with much suit, much submission, by others, by himselfe; hee sends first the Elders of the Iewes, whom hee might hope, that their Nation and place, might make gracious: then, lest the employment of others might argue neglect, he seconds them in person: Cold and fruitlesse are the motions of friends, where wee doe wilfully shut vp our owne lips: Impertunity cannot but speed well in both. Could wee but speake for our selues, as this Captaine did for his Seruant, what could wee possibly want? What maruell is it if God be not forward to giue, where we care not to aske, or aske, as if wee cared not to receiue? Shall wee yet call this a suit, or a complaint? I heare no one word of entreaty: The lesse is said, the more is concealed, it is enough to lay open his want: He knew well, that hee had to deale with so wise and mercifull a Physician, as that the opening of the maladie was a crauing of cure: If our spirituall miseries be but confessed, they cannot faile of redresse.

Great variety of Suitors resorted to Christ; One comes to him for a Sonne, another for a Daughter, a third for himselfe: I see none come for his Seruant, but this one Centurion; Neither was he a better man then a Master: His Seruant is sick; hee doth not driue him out of doores, but layes him at home; neither doth he stand gazing by his beds-side, but seekes forth; He seekes forth, not to Witches or Charmers, but to Christ; he seekes to Christ, not with a fashionable relation, but with a vehement aggrauation of the disease. Had the Master beene sicke, the faithfullest Seruant could haue done no more: He is vnworthy to be well serued, that will not sometimes waite vpon his followers. Conceits of inferioritie, may not breed in vs a neglect of charitable offices; so must we looke downe vpon our Seruants, here on earth, as that we must still looke vp to our Master, which is in Heauen.

But why didst thou not, O Centurion, rather bring thy Seruant to Christ for cure, then sue for him absent? There was a Paralyticke, whom Faith and Charitie brought to our Sauour, and let downe thorow the vncouered roofe, in his Bed: why was not thine so carryed, so presented? Was it out of the strength of thy faith,

which

which assured thee, thou needest not shew thy Seruant to him, that saw all things. One and the same grace, may yeeld contrarie effects; They because they beleued, brought the Patient to Christ, thou broughtest not thine to him, because thou beleuest; their act argued no lesse desire, thine more confidence; Thy labour was lesse, because thy faith was more: Oh, that I could come thus to my Saviour, and make such mone to him for my selfe: Lord, my soule is sicke of vnbeliefe, sicke of selfeloue, sicke of inordinate desires, I should not neede to say more; Thy mercie, O Saviour, would not then stay by for my suit, but would preuent mee (as here) with a gracious ingagement, *I will come and heale thee*. I did not heare the Centurion say, *Either come, or heale him*; The one he meant, though he said not, the other, hee neither said nor meant: Christ ouer-giues, both his words and intentions; It is the manner of that diuine munificence, where hee meets with a faithfull Suitor, to giue more than is requested; to giue when hee is not requested. The very insinuations of our necessities are no lesse violent, than successfull: We thinke the measure of humane bountie runnes ouer, when we obtayne but what we aske with importunitie: that infinite goodnesse keepes within bounds, when it ouer-floues the desires of our hearts.

As he said so hee did; The word of Christ either is his act, or concurreth with it; Hee did not stand still when hee said, *I will come*, but hee went as hee spake. When the Ruler intreated him for his sonne (*Come downe ere hee dye*) our Saviour stird not a foote: the Centurion did but complaine of the sicknesse of his Seruant, and Christ vnasked sayes, *I will come and heale him*. That hee might bee farre from so much as seeming to honour wealth, and despise meannesse, hee that came in the shape of a Seruant, would goe downe to the sicke Seruants paller, would not goe to the Bed of the rich Rulers Sonne; It is the basest motiue of respect, that ariseth meere from outward greatnesse. Either more grace, or more need, may iustly challenge our fauourable regards no lesse than private Obligations.

Euen so, O Saviour, that which thou offeredst to doe for the Centurions Seruant, hast thou done for vs; Wee were sicke vnto death: So farre had the dead pallie of sinne ouer-taken vs, that there was no life of grace left in vs: When thou wert not content to sit still in heauen, and say, *I will cure them*, but addedst also, *I will come and cure them*; Thy selfe came downe accordingly to this miserable World, and hast personally healed vs, So as now we shall not dye but liue, and declare thy workes, O Lord; And oh! that wee could enough prayse that loue and mercy, which hath so graciously abased thee, and could be but so low deiected before thee, as thou hast stooped low vnto vs; that wee could be but as lowly subiects of thy goodnesse, as we are vnworthy.

Oh admirable returne of Humilitie: Christ will goe downe to visite the sicke Seruant; the master of that Seruant sayes, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come vnder my roose*: The Iewish Elders, that went before to mediate for him, could say, (*He is worthy that thou shouldest doe this for him*;) but the Centurion, when hee comes to speake for himselfe (*I am not worthy*.) They said, He was worthy of Christs miracle; Hee sayes he is vnworthy of Christs presence: There is great difference betwixt others valuations, and our owne: Sometimes the world vnder-rates him that findes reason to set an high price vpon himselfe: Sometimes againe, it ouer-values a man that knowes iust cause of his owne humiliation: If others mistake vs, this can bee no warrant for our error: We cannot be wise, vnlesse we receiue the knowledge of our selues by direct beames, not by reflection, vnlesse wee haue learned to contemne vnjust applauses; and scorning the flattery of the World, to frowne vpon our owne vilenesse, *Lord, I am not worthy*.

Many a one if he had bin in the Centurions coate, would haue thought well of it, A Captaine, a man of good ability and command, a founder of a Synagogue, a Patron of Religion: yet he ouer-lookes all these, and when hee casts his eye vpon the diuine worth of Christ, and his owne weakenesse, he sayes, *I am not worthy*: *Alas Lord, I am a Gentile, an Alien, a man of blood; thou art holy, thou art omnipotent*. True

Humi.

Humilitie will teach vs to finde out the best of another, and the worst piece of our selues: Pride contrarily shewes vs nothing, but matter of admiration in our selues, in others, of contempt. Whiles hee confest himselfe vnworthy of any fauour; hee approued himselfe worthy of all. Had not Christ beene before in his heart, he could not haue thought himselfe vnworthy to entertayne that Guest within his house: Vnder the low rooffe of an humble brest doth God euer delight to dwell: The state of his Palace may not be measured by the height, but by the depth: Brags and bold-faces doe oft-times carry it away with men; nothing preuailes with God, but our voluntary deuotions.

It is fit the foundations should be layd deepe, where the building is high. The Centurions Humility was not more low, then his faith was lofty; that reaches vp into Heauen, and in the face of humane weakenesse descryes Omnipotence: *Onely say the word, and my Seruants shall be whole.*

Had the Centurions rooffe beene Heauen it selfe, it could not haue beene worthy to bee come vnder, of him, whose Word was Almighty, and who was the Almighty Word of his Father; Such is Christ confessed by him that sayes, *Onely say the word;* none but a diuine Power is vnlimited; neither hath Faith any other bounds then God himselfe. There needs no footing to remoue Mountaines, or Devils, but a word; doe but say the word, O Saviour, my sinne shall be remitted; my soule shall bee healed, my body shall be raised from dust; both soule and body shall be glorious.

Whereupon then was the steddie confidence of the good Centurion? Hee saw how powerfull his owne word was with those, that were vnder his command, (though himselfe were vnder the command of another) the force whereof extended euen to absent performances; well therefore might he argue, that a free and vnbounded power might giue infallible commands, and that the most obstinate Disease, must therefore needs yeeld to the becke of the God of nature: weakenesse may shew vs what is in strength; By one drop of water wee may see what is in the mayne Ocean; I maruell not if the Centurion were kind to his Seruants, for they were dutifull to him; hee can but say *Doe this*, and it is done; these mutuall respects draw on each other; cheerefull and diligent seruice in the one, calls for a due and fauourable care in the other; they that neglect to please, cannot complaine to be neglected. Oh that I could bee but such a Seruant to mine heavenly Master: Alas, euery of his commands, sayes, *Doe this*, and I doe it not: Euery of his inhibitions sayes, *Doe it not*, and I Doe it; Hee sayes, goe from the World, I runne to it, hee sayes, *Come to mee*, I runne from him: Woe is mee, this is not seruice, but enmity: How can I looke for fauour, whiles I returne rebellion; It is a gracious Master whom wee serue; there can be no duty of ours, that hee sees not, that he acknowledges not, that hee crownes not; we could not but bee happy, if wee could be officious.

What can be more maruellous than to see Christ maruell? All maruelling supposes an ignorance going before, and a knowledge following some accident vnexpected: now who wrought this Faith in the Centurion, but hee that wondred at it? He knew well what he wrought, because he wrought what he would; yet hee wondred at what he both wrought and knew, to teach vs, much more to admire that, which he at once knowes and holds admirable.

He wrought this faith as God, hee wondred at it as man: God wrought, and man admired: hee that was both, did both, to teach vs where to bestow our wonder. I neuer finde Christ wondring at gold, or silver, at the costly and curious workes of humane skill or industry: yea, when the Disciples wondred at the magnificence of the Temple, he rebuked them rather. I finde him not wondring at the frame of heauen and earth, nor at the orderly disposition of all creatures and euent; the familiaritie of these things intercepts the admiration: But when he sees the grace or acts of faith, hee so approues them, that he is rauished with wonder. Hee that reioyced in the view of his Creation, to see that of nothing he had made all things good, reioyces no lesse in the reformation of his Creature, to see, that he had made good of euill: Behold thou art

faire, my Loue, behold thou art faire, and there is no spot in thee: My Sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thine eyes.

Our Wealth, Beautie, Wit, Learning, Honour, may make vs accepted of men, but it is our Faith onely, that shall make God in loue with vs: And why are wee of any other saue Gods Dyet, to bee more affected with the least measure of Grace in any man, then with all the outward glories of the World? There are great men whom we iustly pittie, we can admire none but the gracious.

Neither was that plant more worthy of wonder in it selfe, then that it grew in such a soyle, with so little helpe of Raine and Sunne: The weakenesse of meanes, addes to the prayse and acceptation of our proficiency: To doe good vpon a little is the commendation of thrift; it is small thanke to bee full handed in a large estate: As contrarily, the strength of meanes doubles the reuenge of our neglect: It is not more the shame of Israel, then the glory of the Centurion, that our Sauour sayes, *I haue not found so great faith in Israel*; Had Israel yeelded any equall faith, it could not haue bene vnspied of those All-seeing eyes; yet were their helpes so much greater, then their faith was lesse; and God neuer giues more then hee requires: Where wee haue laid our Tillage, and Compost, and Seed, who would not looke for a Crop? but if the vncultured fallow yeeld more, how iustly is that vnanswerable ground neere to a curse?

Our Sauour did not mutter this censorious testimony to himselfe, not whisper it to his Disciples, but he turned him about to the people, and spake it in their eares, that he might at once worke their shame and emulation: In all other things, except spirituall, our selfe-loue makes vs impatient of equals, much lesse can wee endure to be out-stripped by those, who are our professed inferiours. It is well if any thing can kindle in vs holy ambitions: Dull and base are the spirits of that man, that can abide to see another ouertake him in the way, and out-run him to heauen.

He that both wrought this faith, and wondred at it, doth now reward it, *Goe thy wayes, and as thou hast beleued, so be it vnto thee*; Neuer was any faith vnscene of Christ, neuer was any scene without allowance, neuer was any allowed without remuneration: The measure of our receipts in the matter of fauour, is the proportion of our beliefe; The infinite Mercy of God (which is euer like it selfe) followes but one rule in his gifts to vs, the faith that hee giues vs: Giue vs, O God, to beleue, and be it to vs as thou wilt, it shall be to vs aboue that we will.

The Centurion sues for his Seruant, and Christ sayes, *So be it vnto thee*; The Seruants health is the benefir of the Master; and the Masters Faith is the health of the Seruant; And if the Prayers of an earthly Master, preuayled so much with the Sonne of God, for the recovery of a Seruant, how shall the intercession of the Sonne of God, preuayle with his Father in Heauen, for vs that are his impotent Children and Seruants vpon Earth? What can wee want, O Sauour, whiles thou suest for vs? Hee that hath giuen thee for vs, can deny thee nothing for vs, can deny vs nothing for thee; In thee we are happy, and shall be glorious; To thee, O thou mightie

Redeemer of Israel, with thine eternall Father, together with thy

blesed Spirit, one God infinite, and incomprehensible, be

giuen all prayse, Honour, and Glory, for

euere and euere. Amen.

(*)



Contemplations.

THE THIRD
BOOKE.

Containing { *The Widowers sonne raised.*
The Rulers sonne healed.
The dumbe Devill eiected.
Matthew called.
Christ among the Gergesens; or Legion,
and the Gaderene Herd.

BY I O S. H A L L, D. of Diuinitie, and Deane
of V V O R C E S T E R.



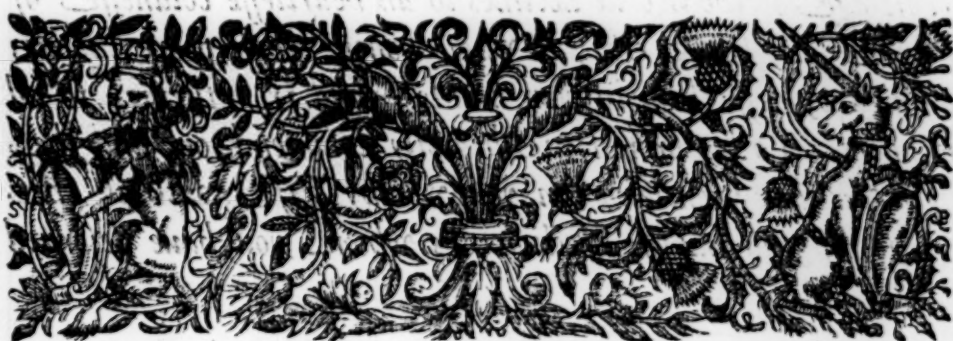
Imprinted at *London* in the yeare 1628.

THE
BOOK

The Western world
The Eastern world
The Middle East
The Far East
The Pacific
The Arctic
The Antarctic
The Tropics
The Equator
The Poles

THE
BOOK

Printed in London in the year 1841



T O M Y R I G H T
W O R T H Y A N D V V O R -
S H I P F V L L F R I E N D M A S T E R

I O H N G I F F O R D of Lancrasse in
Deuon, Esquire, All Grace
and Peace.



FR,

I hold it (as I ought) one of the rich mercies of God, that hee hath giuen mee fauour in some eyes which haue not seene mee, but none that I know, hath so much demerited mee, vnknowne, as your worthy Familie: Ere therefore you see my face, see my hand willingly professing my thankefull obligations: Wherewith may it please you to accept of this parcell of thoughts, not vnlike those fellowes of theirs, whom you haue entertained aboue their desert. These shall present vnto you our bountifull SAVIOUR, magnifying his mercies to men, in a sweet varietie; bealing the diseased, raising the dead, casting out the Deuill, calling in the Publican, and shall raise your heart to adore that infinite goodnesse; Euery helpe to our deuotion deserves to be precious; So much more, as the decrepit

crepit age of the World declines to an heartlesse coldnesse of Pietie: That GOD, to whose honour these poore labours are meant, blesse them in your hands, and from them, to all Readers. To his protection I heartily commend you, and the right vertuous Gentlewoman, your worthy Wife, with all the pledges of your happy affection, as whom you haue deserved to be

Your truly thankfull

and officious Friend,

JOS. HALL.





The Widowes Sonne raised.



HE fauours of our beneficent Sauour were at the least contiguous. No sooner hath he raised the Centurions seruant from his bed, then he raises the Widowes Sonne from his Beere.

The fruitfull clouds are not ordained to fall all in one field; Nain must partake of the bounty of Christ as well as Cana, or Capernaum: And if this Sonne were fixed in one Orbe, yet it diffuseth heate, and light to all the world: It is not for any place to ingrolle the messengers of the Gospell, whose errand is vniuersall: This immortall seed may not fall all in one furrow.

The little City of Nain stood vnder the hill of Hermon, neere vnto Tabor; but now it is watered with better dewes from above, the doctrine and miracles of a Sauour.

Not for state, but for the more euidence of the worke, is our Sauour attended with a large traine; so entring into the gate of that walled City, as if hee meant to besiege their faith by his power, and to take it. His providence hath so contriued his iourney, that hee meets with the sad pompe of a funerall; A wofull widow attended with her weeping neighbours is following her onely sonne to the graue: There was nothing in this spectacle that did not command compassion.

A young man in the flowre, in the strength of his age swallowed vp by death: Our decrepit age both expects death, and solicites it; but vigorous youth, lookes strangely vpon that grim sergeant of God: Those mellow apples that fall alone from the tree, we gather vp with contentment; wee chide to haue the vnripe vnseasonably beaten downe with cudgells.

But more, a young man, the onely sonne, the onely childe of his mother: No condition can make it other then grieuous for a well natur'd mother to part with her owne bowels; yet surely there is some mitigation of losse: Amongst many children one may be more easily missed; for still wee hope the suruiuing may supply the comforts of the dead: but when all our hopes and ioyes must either liue or die in one, the losse of that one admits of no consolation.

When God would describe the most passionate expression of sorrow that can fall into the miserable, hee can but say, Oh daughter of my people gird thee with sackcloth; and wallow thy selfe in the ashes, make lamentation and bitter mourning, as for thine onely sonne: Such was the losse, such was the sorrow of this disconsolate mother; neither words, nor teares can suffice to discouer it.

Yet more, had shee beeing ayded by the counsell and supportation of a louing yokefellow, this burden might haue seemed lesse intollerable: A good husband may make amends for the losse of a sonne; had the moor beeing left to her intire, shee might better haue spared the branch; how both are cut up, all the stay of her life is gone; and shee seemes abandoned to a perfect misery. And now when shee gaue her selfe vp for a
for-

forlorne mourner, past all capacity of redresse, the God of comfort meets her, pitties her, relieues her : Here was no solicitor but his owne compassion : In other occasions he was sought, and sued to : The Centurion comes to him for a seruant, the Ruler for a sonne, *Iairus* for a daughter, the neighbours for the Paralytike, here hee seekes vp the patient, and offers the cure vnrequested : Whiles we haue to doe with the Father of mercies, our afflictions are the most powerfull suitors. No teares, no prayers can moue him so much as his owne commiseration. Oh God, none of our secret sorrowes, can be either hid from thine eyes, or kept from thine heart : and when wee are past all our hopes, all possibilities of helpe; then art thou neere to vs for deliuerance.

Here was a conspiracy of all parts to mercy. The heart had compassion, the mouth said, *Weepe not*, the feet went to the Beere, the hand touched the coffin, the power of the Deity raised the dead : What the heart felt was secret to it selfe, the tongue therefore expresses it in words of comfort, *Weepe not*; Alas what are words to so strong and iust passions? To bid her not to weepe that had lost her onely sonne, was to perswade her to be miserable, and not feele it : to feele, and not regard it : to regard, and yet to smother it : Concealement doth not remedy but aggrauate sorrow : That with the counsell of not weeping therefore, she might see cause of not weeping; his hand seconds his tongue : He arrests the Coffin, and frees the Prisoner; *Young man I say vnto thee, arise* : The Lord of life, and death, speaks with command; No finite power could haue said so without presumption, or with successe : That is the voice that shall one day call vp our vanished bodies from those elements, into which they are resolued, and raise them ouer their dust: Neither sea, nor death, nor hell can offer to detain their dead, when he charges them to be deliuered : Incredulous nature, what dost thou shrink at the possibilitie of a resurrection, when the God of nature vndertakes it? It is no more hard for that almighty Word which gaue being vnto all things, to say, *Let them be repaired*, then, *Let them be made*.

I doe not see our Sauour stretching himselfe vpon the dead corps, as *Elias*, and *Elisha*, vpon the sonnes of the Sunamite, and Sareptan, nor kneeling downe, and praying by the Beere, as *Peter* did to *Dorcas*, but I heare him so speaking to the dead, as if he were aliue, and so speaking to the dead that by the word hee makes him aliue, *I say vnto thee, arise*; Death hath no power to bid that man lye still, whom the Sonne of God bids *Arise*. Immediately he that was dead late vp. So at the found of the last trumpet by the power of the same voice, wee shall arise out of the dust, and stand vp glorious; this mortall shall put on immortallitie; this corruptible, incorruption: This body shall not be buried, but sowne; and at our day shall therefore spring vp with a plentifull increase of glory; How comfortlesse, how desperate should be our lying downe, if it were not for this assurance of rising? And now, behold, lest our weak faith should stagger at the assent to so great a difficultie, he hath already by what hee hath done, giuen vs taste of what he will doe : The power that can raise one man, can raise a thousand, a million, a world: no power can raise one man, but that which is infinite; and that which is infinite admits of no limitation : Vnder the old Testament, God raised one by *Elias*, another by *Elisha* liuing, a third by *Elisha* dead: By the hand of the Mediator of the New Testament, hee raised here the sonne of the Widow, the daughter of *Iairus*, *Lazarus*, and, in attendance of his owne resurrection he made a gale-delivery of holy prisoners at Ierusalem. Hee raises the daughter of *Iairus* from her bed; this widowes sonne from his Coffin, *Lazarus* from his graue, the dead Saints of Ierusalem from their rottennes, that it might appeare no degree of death can hinder the efficacy of his ouer-ruling command : Hee that keepes the keyes of death cannot onely make way for himselfe through the common Hall, and outer-rooms, but through the inwardest and most reserved closets of darknesse.

Me thinks I see this young man who was thus miraculously awaked from his deadly sleepe, wiping and rubbing those eyes that had bene shut up in death; and descending from the Beere, wrapping his winding sheet about his loynes, cast himselfe downe

in a passionate thankfulnesse, at the feet of his Almighty restorer; adoring that diuine power which had commanded his soule back again to her forsaken lodging; & though I heare not what he said, yet I dare say they were words of praise & wonder, which his returned soule first uttered; It was the mother whom our Sauior pitied in this act, not the sonne; (who now forced from his quiet rest must twice passe through the gates of death.) As for her sake therefore he was raised; so to her hands was he deliuered; that she might acknowledge that soule giuen to her, not to the possessor: Who cannot feele the amazement and extasie of ioy that was in this reuiued mother, when her son now salutes her from out of another world? And both receiues and giues gratulations of his new life? How suddenly were all the teares of that mournfull traine dried vp with a ioyfull astonishment? How soone is that funerall banquet turned into a new Birth-day feast? What striding was here to salute the late carkasse of their returned neighbour? What awfull and admiring lookes were cast vpon that Lord of life, who seeming homely, was approued omnipotent? How gladly did euery tongue celebrate both the worke and the author? *A great Prophet is raised vp amongst vs, and God hath visited his people.* A Prophet was the highest name they could finde for him, whom they saw like themselves in shape, about themselves in power: They were not yet acquainted with God manifested in the flesh: This miracle might well haue assured them of more then a Prophet; but hee that raised the dead man from the Beere, would not suddenly raise these dead hearts from the graue of Infidelitie: they shall see reason enough to know that the Prophet who was raised vp to them, was the God that now visited them, and at last should doe as much for them, as he had done for the yong man, raise them from death to life, from dust to glory.



The Rulers Sonne cured.

Habounty of God so exceedeth mans, that there is a contrarietie in the exercise of it: We shut our hands because we opened them; God therefore opens his, because he hath opened them: Gods mercies are as comfortable in their issue, as in themselves; Seldome euer doe blessings goe alone; where our Sauior supplied the Bridegroomes wine, there he heales the Rulers sonne; Hee had not in all these coasts of Galilee done any miracle but here: To him that hath shall be giuen.

We doe not finde Christ oft attended with Nobilitie; here hee is; It was some great Peere, or some noted Courtier that was now a suitor to him for his dying sonne: Earthly greatnesse is no defence against afflictions: Wee men forbear the mighty: Disease and death know no faces of Lords, or monarks: Could these be bribed, they would be too rich; why should we grudge not to be priuiledged, when wee see there is no spare of the greatest?

This noble Ruler, listens after Christs returne into Galile; The most eminent amongst men will be glad to hearken after Christ in their necessitie: Happy was it for him that his sonne was sicke; he had not else been acquainted with his Sauior, his soule had continued sicke; of ignorance, and vnbeliefe: Why else doth our good God send vs pain, losses, opposition, but that he may be sought to? Are we afflicted, whither should we goe but to Cana, to seeke Christ? whither but to the Cana of heauen, where our water of sorrow is turned to the wine of gladnesse, to that omnipotent Physician, who healeth all our infirmities; that we may once say, *It is good for mee that I was afflicted.*

It was about a dayes iourney from Capernaum to Cana; Thence hither did this Courtier come for the cure of his sonnes Feuer, What paines euen the greatest can be content to take for bodily health & No way is long, to labour tedious to the desirous:

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Our

Our soules are sicke of a spirituall feuer, labouring vnder the cold fit of infidelitie, and the hot fit of selfe loue; and we sit still at home, and see them languish vnto death.

This Ruler was neither faithlesse, nor faithfull: Had he been quite faithlesse, he had not taken such paines to come to Christ. Had he been faithfull, hee had not made this suit to Christ, when he was come, *Come downe and heale my sonne, ere he die.*

Come downe, as if Christ could not haue cured him absent; Ere he die, as if that power could not haue raised him being dead; how much difference was here betwixt the Centurion, and the Ruler? That came for his seruant, this for his sonne. This sonne was not more about the seruant, then the faith which sued for the seruant surpassed that which sued for the sonne; The one can say, *Master come not vnder my roose, for I am not worthy, onely speake the word, and my seruant shall be whole;* The other can say, *Master, either come vnder my roose, or my sonne cannot be whole. Heale my sonne,* had been a good suit, for Christ is the onely Physitian for all diseases; but, *Come downe, and heale him,* was to teach God how to worke.

It is good reason that he should challenge the right of prescribing to vs, who are euery way his owne: it is presumption in vs to stint him vnto our formes: An expert workman cannot abide to be taught by a nouice; how much lesse shall the all-wise God endure to bee directed by his creature. This is more then if the patient should take vpon him to giue a Recipe to the Physitian: That God would giue vs grace is a beleeuing suit, but to say, *Giue it me by prosperitie,* is a sawcy motiue.

As there is faithfulness in desiring the end, so modesty and patience in referring the meanes to the author. In spirituall things God hath acquainted vs with the meanes whereby he will worke, euen his owne Sacred ordinances: Vpon these, because they haue his owne promise, we may call absolutely for a blessing: In all others, there is no reason that beggers should be choosers: He who doth whatsoeuer he will, must doe it how he will: It is for vs to receiue, not to appoint.

He who came to complaine of his sons sicknes, heares of his owne, *Except ye see signes and wonders, ye will not beleene.* This noble man was (as is like) of Capernaum; There had Christ often preached; there was one of his chiefe residencies: Either this man had heard our Sauour oft, or might haue done; yet because Christs miracles came to him onely by heare-say (for as yet we finde none at all wrought where hee preached most) therefore the man beleeueth not enough; but so speakes to Christ as to some ordinarie Physitian, *Come downe and heale:* It was the common disease of the Iewes, incredulitie; which no receipt could heale but wonders. A wicked and adulterous generation seekes signes. Had they not been wilfully gracelesse, there was already prooffe enough of the Messias: the miraculous conception and life of the fore-runner, *Zacharies* dumbnesse, the attestation of Angels, the apparition of the Starre, the iourney of the Sages, the vision of the Shepheards, the testimonies of *Anna* and *Simeon*, the prophesies fulfilled, the voice from heauen at his baptism, the diuine words that hee spake; and yet they must haue all made vp with miracles; which though he be not vnwilling to giue at his owne times, yet he thinks much to be tied vnto, at theirs: Not to beleene without signes, was a signe of stubborne hearts.

It was a foule fault, and a dangerous one, *Ye will not beleene:* What is it that shall condemne the world but vnbeliefe? What can condemne vs without it? No sin can condemne the repentant; Repentance is a fruit of faith, where true faith is then, there can be no condemnation: as there can be nothing but condemnation without it. How much more foule in a noble Capernaite, that had heard the Sermons of so diuine a Teacher? The greater light we haue, the more shame it is for vs to stumble.

Oh what shall become of vs, that reele and fall in the clearest Sunne-shine that euer looked forth vpon any Church? Be mercifull to our sinnes, O God, and say any thing of vs, rather then, *Ye will not beleene.*

Our Sauour tels him of his vnbeliefe; hee feeles not himselfe sicke of that disease: All his mind is on his dying son; As easily do we complaine of bodily griefes, as we are hardly affected with spirituall. Oh the meeknesse and mercy of this Lambe of God:

When

When wee would haue lookt that hee should haue punished this sutor for not beleeuing, hee condescends to him, that hee may beleue: *Goe thy way, thy sonne liueth.* If wee should measure our hopes by our owne worthinesse, there were no expectation of blessings, but if we shall measure them by his bountie, and compassion, there can bee no doubt of preuailing. As some tender mother that giues the brest to her vnquiet childe, in stead of the rod, so deales hee with our peruersnesses.

How God differences men according to no other conditions, then of their faith! The Centurions seruant was sicke, the Rulers sonne; The Centurion doth not sue vnto Christ to come; onely sayes, *My seruant is sicke of a Palsie.* Christ answers him, *I will come, and heale him:* The Ruler sues vnto Christ that hee would come, and heale his sonne, Christ will not goe; onely sayes, *Goe thy way, thy sonne liues;* Ourward things carie no respect with God; The Image of that diuine Maiestie shining inwardly in the graces of the soule, is that which wins loue from him in the meanest estate; The Centurions faith therefore could do more then the Rulers greatnesse; and that faithfull mans seruant hath more regard then this great mans sonne.

The Rulers request was, *Come and heale;* Christs answer was, *Goe thy way, thy sonne liues;* Our mercifull Sauour meets those in the end, whom hee crosses in the way: How sweetly doth he correct our prayers, and whiles he doth not giue vs what we aske, giues vs better then we asked.

Iustly doth he forbear to go downe with this Ruler, lest he should confirme him in an opinion of measuring his power by conceits of locality, & distance; but he doth that in absence; for which his presence was required with a repulse, *Thy sonne liueth;* giuing a greater demonstration of his omnipotencie then was craued; How oft doth hee not heare to our will; that hee may heare vs to our advantage? The chosen vessel would be rid of tentations, he heares of a supply of grace; The sicke man askes release, receiues patience: life, and receiues glory: Let vs aske what we thinke best, let him giue what he knowes best.

With one word doth Christ heale two Patients, the sonne, and the father, the sons feuer, the fathers vnbeleefe; That operative word of our Sauour was not without the intention of a triall; Had not the Ruler gone home satisfied with that intimation of his sonnes life, and recouerie, neither of them had bene blessed with successe: Now the newes of performance meets him one halfe of the way; and hee that beleued some what ere he came, and more when he went, grew to more faith in the way; and when he came home, enlarged his faith to all the skirts of his familie; A weake faith may be true, but a true faith is growing: He that boasts of a full stature in the first moment of his assent, may presume, but doth not beleue.

Great men cannot want clients, their example swaies some, their authoritie more; they cannot goe to either of the other worlds alone; In vaine doe they pretend power ouer others, who labour not to draw their families vnto God.

The Dumb Deuill erected.

THat the Prince of our Peace might approue his perfect victories, where soeuer hee met with the Prince of darknesse hee foyled him, he erected him; He found him in heauen, thence did hee throw him headlong, and verified his Prophet, *I haue cast thee out of mine holy mountaine.* And if the Devils left their first habitation, it was because (being Deuils) they could not keepe it; Their estate indeed they might haue kept.

and did not; their habitation they would haue kept, and might not; How art thou false from heauen O Lucifer? He found him in the heart of man; (for in that closet of God did the euill spirit after his exile from heauen shrowd himselfe; Sin gaue him possession, which he kept with a willing violence) thence hee casts him by his word, and spirit; He found him tyrannizing in the bodies of some possessed men, and with power commands the vncleane spirits to depart.

This act is for no hand but his: When a strong man keepes possession, none but a stronger can remoue it: In voluntary things the strongest may yeeld to the weakest, *Sampson* to a *Dalilah*; but in violent, euer the mightiest carries it; A spirituall nature must needs be in ranke aboue a bodily; neither can any power be aboue a spirit, but the God of spirits.

No otherwise is it in the mentall possession, Where euer sinne is, there Satan is; As on the contrary, whosoeuer is borne of God, the seed of God remains in him, That euill one not onely is, but rules in the sonnes of disobedience: in vaine shall wee try to eie& him, but by the diuine power of the Redeemer; For this cause the Sonne of God was manifested, that hee might destroy the workes of the Deuill, Doe we finde our selues haunted with the familiar Deuills of Pride, selfe-loue, sensuall desires, vnbeleefe? None but thou, O Son of the euerliuing God, can free our bosomes of these hellish guests; Oh cleanse thou mee from my secret sinnes, and keepe mee that presumptuous sinnes preuaile not ouer mee: O Sauour, it is no Paradox to say that thou castest out more Deuils now, then thou diddest whiles thou wert vpon earth; It was thy word, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men vnto me*; Satan weighes downe at the feet, thou pullest at the head, yea at the heart; In euery conuersion which thou workest, there is a dispossession. Conuert mee, O Lord, and I shall be conuerted: I know thy meanes are now and other then ordinary; if we expect to be dispossessed by miracle, it would be a miracle, if euer wee were dispossessed; Oh let thy Gospell haue the perfect worke in me, so onely shall I bee deliuered from the powers of darknesse.

Nothing can be said to be dumbe, but what naturally speaks; nothing can speake naturally, but what hath the instruments of speech; which because spirits want, they can no otherwise speake vocally, then as they take voices to themselves, in taking bodies: This deuill was not therefore dumbe in his nature, but in his effect: The man was dumbe by the operation of that deuill, which possessed him; and now the action is attributed to the spirit, which was subiectiuely in the man; It is not you that speake, saith our Sauour, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.

As it is in bodily diseases, that they doe not infect vs alike, some seize vpon the humors, others vpon the spirits; some assault the braine, others the heart, or lungs; so in bodily and spirituall possessions: In some the euill spirit takes away their senses, in some their limms, in some their inward faculties; like as spirituallly they affect to moue vs vnto seuerall sinnes: One to lust, another to couetousnesse, or ambition; another to cruelty: and their names haue distinguished them according to these various effects: This was a dumbe Deuill, which yet had possessed not the tongue onely of this man, but his eare, nor that onely, but (as it seemes) his eyes too.

O furtiue and tyrannous spirit, that obstructs all wayes to the soule: that keepes out all meanes of grace both from the doore, and windowes of the heart; yea that stops vp all passages whether of ingresse, or egress. Oh ingresse at the eye, or eare, of egress at the mouth, that there might be no capacity of redresse.

What holy vse is there of our tongue but to praise our Maker, to confesse our sinnes, to informe our brethren? How rife is this Dumbe Deuill euery where, whiles hee stops the mouthes of Christians from these vsfull and necessary duties?

For what end hath man those two priuiledges aboue his fellow creatures, Reason, and Speech, but, that, as by the one he may conceiue of the great workes of his Maker, which the rest cannot; so by the other he may expresse what hee conceiues

to the honor of the Creator, both of them, and himselfe; And why are all other creatures said to praise God, and bidden to praise him, but because they doe it by the apprehension, by the expression of man? If the heavens declare the glory of God, how doe they it but to the eies, and by the tongue of that man, for whom they were made? It is no small honor whereof the enuious spirit shall rob his Maker, if he can close vp the mouth of his onely rationall, and vocall creature, and turne the best of his workmanship into a dumbe Idoll, that hath a mouth and speakes not; *Lord open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*

Praise is not more necessary then complaint; praise of God, then complaint of our selues, whether to God, or men; The onely amends we can make to God, when we haue not had the grace to auoid sinne, is to confesse the sinne wee haue not auoided: This is the sponge that wipes out all the blots and burs of our liues; If wee confesse our sinnes, he is faithfull and iust to forgie vs our sins, and to cleanse vs from all vnrighteousnesse.

That cunning man-slayer knowes there is no way to purge the sicke soule, but vpward, by casting out the vicious humor wherewith it is clogged; and therefore holds the lips close, that the heart may not disburden it selfe by so wholesome euacuation. *When I kept silence, my bones consumed; For day and night thy hand O Lord, was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of Summer: O let me confesse against my selfe my wickednesse vnto thee, that thou maist forgie the punishment of my sinne.*

We haue a tongue for God, when wee praise him; for our selues, when we pray, and confesse; for our brethren, when we speake the truth for their information, which if we hold backe in vnrighteousnesse, we yeeld vnto that dumbe Deuill: where doe we not see that accursed spirit? Hee is on the Bench, when the mute, or partiall Iudge speakes not for truth, and innocence: Hee is in the pulpit, when the Prophets of God smother, or halue, or adulterate the message of their master: Hee is at the Barre, when irreligious Iurors dare lend an oath to feare, to hope, to gaine: Hee is in the market, when godlesse chapmen for their peny sell the truth, and their soule: Hee is in the common conuersation of men, when the tongue belies the heart, flatters the guilty, balketh reproofes euen in the foulest crimes: O thou, who only art stronger then that strong one, cast him out of the hearts, and mouthes of men; *It is time for thee, Lord, to worke, for they haue destroyed thy Law.*

That it might well appeare this impediment was not naturall; so soone, as the man is freed from the spirit, his tongue is free to his speech: The effects of spirits as they are wrought, so they cease at once. If the Sonne of God doe but remoue our spirituall possession, we shall presently breake forth into the praise of God, into the confession of our vilenesse, into the profession of truth.

But, what strange variety doe I see in the spectators of his miracle, some wondring, others censuring, a third sort tempting, a fourth applauding: There was neuer man or action, but was subiect to variety of constructions: What man could bee so holy, as he that was God? What act could be more worthy, then the dispossession of an euill spirit? yet this man, this act passeth these differences of interpretation: What can we doe to vndergoe but one opinion? If we giue almes, and fast, some will magnifie our charity, and deuotion, others will taxe our hypocrisie: If wee giue not, some will condemne our hard-heartednesse, others will allow our care of iustice: if wee preach plainly, to some it will fauour of a carelesse slubbering, to others of a mortified sincerity: Elaborately, some will tax our affectation, others will applaud our diligence in dressing the delicate viands of God: What maruell is it, if it bee thus with our imperfection, when it fared not otherwise with him that was purity, and righteousness it selfe? The austere fore-runner of Christ came neither eating nor drinking, they say, *He hath a Deuill.* The sonne of man came eating and drinking, they say, *This man is a glutton, a friend of Publicans and sinners:* and here one of his holy acts caries away at once wonder, censure, doubt, celebration. There in no way safe for a man but to square his actions by the right rule of iustice, of charitie; and

then let the world haue leaue to spend their glosses at pleasure. It was an heroicall resolution of the chosen vessell, *I passe very little to be iudged of you, or of mans day.*

I maruell not if the people maruelled; for here were foure wonders in one; The blinde saw, the deafe heard, the dumbe spake, the demoniacke is deliuered; Wonder was due to so rare, and powerfull a worke, and, if not this, nothing; We can cast away admiration vpon the poore deuices, or aduities of men, how much more vpon the extraordinary workes of omnipotency? Who so knowes the frame of Heauen and earth, shall not much be affected with the imperfect effects of fraile humanity; but shall with no lesse rauishment of soule acknowledge the miraculous workes of the same Almighty hand. Neither is the spirituall eiection worthy of any meaner intertainment; Raritie and difficultie are wont to cause wonder; There are many things which haue wonder in their worth, and lesse it in their frequency; there are some which haue it in their strangenesse, and lesse it in their facilitie; Both meet in this. To see men haunted, yea possessed with a dumbe Deuill is so frequent, that it is a iust wonder to finde a man free; but to finde the dumbe spirit cast out of a man, and to heare him praising God, confessing his sinnes, teaching others the sweet experiments of mercy, deserues iust admiration. If the Cynick sought in the market for a man amongst men, well may we seeke amongst men, for a conuert. Neither is the difficultie lesse then the rarenesse: The strong man hath the possession, all passages are blockt vp, all helps barred, by the trechery of our nature; If any soule be rescued from these spirituall wickedneses, it is the praise of him that doth wonders alone.

But whom doe I see wondring? The multitude; The vnlearned beholders follow that act with wonder, which the learned Scribes entertaine with obloquy: God hath reuealed those things to babes, which he hath hid from the wise, and prudent. With what scorne did those great Rabbins speake of these sonnes of the earth, *This people that knowes not the Law is accursed?* Yet the mercie of God makes an aduantage of their simplicity; in that they are therefore lesse subiect to cauillation, and incredulitie; as contrarily, his iustice causes the proud knowledge of other to lie as a blocke in their way, to the ready assent vnto the diuine power of the Messias; Let the pride of glorious aduersaries disdain the pouerty of the clients of the Gospell; it shall not repent vs to goe to heauen with the vulgar, whiles their great ones goe in state to perdition.

The multitude wondered; Who censured but Scribes, great Doctors of the Law, of the diuinity of the Iewes? What Scribes, but those of Ierusalem, the most eminent Academie of Iudea? These were the men, who out of their deepe reputed iudgement cast these foule aspersions vpon Christ. Great wits oft-times mislead both the owners and followers; How many shall once wish they had bene borne dullards, yea idiots, when they shall find their wit to haue barred them out of heauen? Where is the Scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made the wisdom of the world foolishnesse? Say the world what it will; a dram of holinesse is worth a pound of wit; Let others censure with the Scribes, let me wonder with the multitude.

What could malice say worse, *Hee casteth out Deuills through Beelzebub the Prince of Deuills?* The Iewes well knew that the Gods of the heathen were no other then Deuills; Amongst whom, for that the *Lord of Flies* (so called, whether for the concurrence of flies to the abundance of his sacrifices; or for his ayde implored against the infestation of those swarms) was held the chiefe, therefore they stile him, *The Prince of Deuills*: There is a subordination of spirits; some hier in degree, some inferiour to others: Our Saviour himselfe tells vs of the Deuill, and his Angels: Messengers are inferiour to those that send them: The seuen Diuells, that entered into the swept and garnished house, were worse then the former: Neither can Principalities, and Powers, and Gouvernours, and Princes of the darkenesse of this World designe other then seuerall ranks of euill Angels; There can be no beeing, without some kinde of order, there can bee no order in paritie; If wee looke vp into heauen, there is *The King of Gods,*
The

The Lord of Lords; hier then the hieft. If to the earth, There are Monarchs, Kings, Princes, Peeres, people: If wee looke downe to hell, *There is the Prince of Devils*: They labour for confusion that call for pariry: What should the Church doe with such a forme, as is not exemplified in heaven, in earth, in hell?

One deuill (according to their supposition) may be vsed to cast out another: How far the command of one spirit ouer another may extend, it is a secret of infernall state, too deepe for the inquiry of men: The thing it selfe is apparent; vpon compact, and precontracted composition, one giues way to other for the common aduantage: As we see in the Common-wealth of Cheaters, and Cut-purses; one doth the fact, another is feed to bring it out, and to procure restitution: both are of the trade; both conspire to the fraud; the actor falls not out with the reuealer; but diuides with him that cunning spoile.

One malicious miscreant sets the Deuill on worke to the inflicting of disease, or death; another vpon agreement, for a further spirituall gaine, takes him off: There is a Deuill in both: And if there seeme more bodily fauour, there is no lesse spirituall danger in the latter: In the one Satan wins the agent, the suitor in the other: It will bee no cause of discord in hell, that one deuill giues ease to the body which another tormented, that both may triumph in the gaine of a soule. O God, that any creature which beares thine Image, should not abhorre to bee beholden to the powers of hell for aid, for aduise? *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that men goe to enquire of the God of Ekron?* Can men be so sortish to thinke that the vowed enemy of their soules can offer them a bait, without an hooke? What euill is there in the City which the Lord hath not done, what is there which he cannot as easily redresse: He wounds, he heales againe: And if hee will not, it is the Lord, let him doe what seemes good in his eyes: If he doe not deliuer vs, he will crowne our faithfulness in a patient peruerance. The wounds of a God are better then the salues of Satan.

Was it possible that the wit of Enuy could deuise so hie a slander? Beelzebub was a God of the heathen; therefore herein they accuse him for an Idolater: Beelzebub was a Deuill to the Iewes, therefore they accuse him for a coniurer: Beelzebub was the chiefe of Devils, therefore they accuse him for an Archexorcist, for the worst kinde of Magician: Some professors of this blacke Art, though their worke be deuillish, yet they pretend to doe it in the name of Iesus, and will presumptuously seeme to doe that by command, which is secretly transacted by agreement: the Scribes accuse Christ of a direct compact with the Deuill, and suppose both a league and familiarity, which by the law of Moses (in the very hand of a Saul) was no other then deadly; Yea so deepe doth this wound reach, that our Saviour searching it to the bottome, findes no lesse in it then the sinne against the Holy Ghost; inferring hereupon that dreadfull sentence of the irremissibleness of that sinne vnto death: And if this horrible crimination were cast vpon thee, O Saviour, in whom the Prince of this world found nothing, what wonder is it if wee thy sinfull seruants bee branded on all sides with euill tongues?

Yea (which is yet more) how plaine is it that these men forced their tongue to speake this slander against their owne heart? Else, this blasphemie had berne onely against the sonne of man, not against the holy Ghost: but now, that the searcher of hearts findes in to be no lesse then against the blessed Spirit of God, the spight must needs be obstinate; their malice doth wilfully crosse their conscience. Enuie neuer regards how true, but how mischiquous: So it may gall, or kill, it cares little, whether with truth, or falshood: For vs, *Blessed are we when men reuile vs, and say all manner of euill of vs, for the name of Christ*; For them: *What reward shall be giuen to thee, thou false tongue?* *Euen sharpe arrowes wialke hot burning coles*; Yea those very coles of hell from which thou wert enkindled.

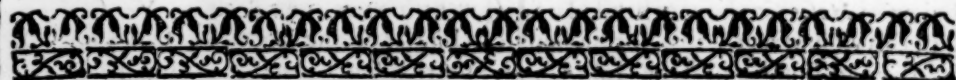
There was yet a third sort that went a mid way betwixt wonder and censure: These were not so malicious as to impute the miracle to a Satanicall operation, they confesse it good, but not enough; and therefore vrge Christ to a further prooffe:

Though

Though thou hast cast out this dumbe Deuill, yet this is no sufficient argument of thy diuine power: We haue yet scene nothing from thee like those ancient miracles of the times our forefathers. Ioshua caused the Sunne to stand still; Elias brought fire downe from heauen; Samuel astonisht the people with thunder and raine in the midst of harvest; If thou wouldst command our beleefe, doe somewhat like to these: The casting out of a Deuill, shewes thee to haue some power ouer hell; shew vs now, that thou hast no lesse power ouer heauen. There is a kinde of vnreasonablenesse of desire, and insatiablenesse in infidelitie; it neuer knowes when it hath euidence enough: This which the Iewes over-looked, was a more irrefragable demonstration of diuinity, then that which they desired. A Deuill was more then a Meteor, or a parcell of an element; to cast out a Deuill by command, more then to command fire from heauen: Infidelitie euer loues to be her owne caruer.

No sonne can be more like a father, then these Iewes to their progenitors in the desert, that there might be no feare of degenerating into good, they also of old tempted God in the Wildernesse: First, they are weary of the Egyptian bondage, and are ready to fall out with God, and Moses, for their stay in those fornaces: By ten miraculous plagues they are freed, and going out of those confines, the Egyptians follow them, the Sea is before them: now they are more afflicted with their libertie, then their feruitude: The Sea yeelds way, the Egyptians are drowned, and now, that they are safe on the other shore, they tempt the prouidence of God for water: The Rocke yeelds it them; then, no lesse for bread and meat; God sends them Manna, & Quailles: they cry out of the food of Angels; Their present enemies in the way are vanquished, they whine at the men of measures, in the heart of Canaan: Nothing from God but mercy; nothing from them but temptations.

Their true brood both in nature and in sinne had abundant proofes of the Messiah; if curing the blinde, lame, diseased, deafe, dumbe, eiebling deuils, over-ruling the elements, raising the dead, could haue beene sufficient; yet still they must haue a signe from heauen; and shut vp in the stile of the Tempter, *If thou bee the Christ*. The gracious heart is credulous: Euen where it sees not, it beleeueth; and where it sees but a little, it beleeueth a great deale: Neither doth it presume to prescribe vnto God what and how he shall worke, but takes what it findes, and vn moueably rests in what it takes. Any miracle, no miracle serues enough for their assent, who haue built their faith vpon the Gospell of the Lord Iesus.



Matthew called.

THE number of the Apostles was not yet full; One roome is left void for a future occupant: who can but expect, that it is reserved for some eminent person? and behold, *Matthew* the Publican is the man: Oh the strange election of Christ: Those other Disciples, whose calling is recorded, were from the Fisher-boate, this from the Tole-booth: They were vnlettered, this infamous: The condition was not in it selfe sinnefull, but as the taxes which the Romans imposed on Gods free people, were odious, so the Collectors, the Farmers of them abominable: Besides, that it was hard to hold that seate without oppression, without exaction: One that best knew it, branded it with poling, and sycophancy: And now, behold a griping Publican called to the familie, to the Apostle-ship, to the Secretary-ship of God: Who can despayre in the conscience of his vnworthinesse, when he sees this patterne of the free bounty of him that calleth vs? Merits doe not cary it in the gracious election of God, but his meere fauour. There sate *Matthew* the Publican busie in his Counting house, reckoning vp the sums of

of his Rentals; raking vp his arrearages, and wrangling for denied duties, & did so little thinke of a Sauour, that he did not so much as look at his passage, but, *Iesus, as he passed by, saw a man sitting at the receipt of custome, named Matthew*: As if this prospect had bin sudden and casuall, *Iesus saw him in passing by*; O Sauour; before the world was, thou sawest that man sitting there, thou sawest thine owne passage, thou sawest his call in thy passage; and now thou goest purposely that way, that thou mightest see and call: Nothing can be hid from that piercing eye, one glance whereof hath discerned a Disciple in the cloathes of a Publican: That habit, that shop of extortion cannot conceale from thee a vessell of election: In all formes thou knowest thine own, and in thine own time shalt fetch them out of the disguises of their foule sinnes, or vnfit conditions: What sawest thou, O Sauour, in that Publican, that might either allure thine eye, or not offend it? What but an hatefull trade, an euill eye, a gripple hand, bloody tables, heapes of spoyle? yet now thou saidest, *Follow me*: Thou that saidst once to Ierusalem, *Thy birth and natinitie is of the land of Canaan*: *Thy father was an Amorite, thy mother an Hittite*: *Thy nanell was not cut, neither wert thou washed in water, to supple thee, thou wast not salted at all; thou wast not swaddled at all*: None eye pitied thee, but thou wast cast out in the open fields, to be loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast borne: And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine owne blood, I said vnto thee, *Line, yea I said vnto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Line*: Now also, when thou passedst by, and sawest *Matthew sitting at the receipt of custome*, saidest to him, *Follow me*: The life of this Publican was so much worse, then the birth of that forlorne Amorite, as, *Follow mee*, was more then, *Line*: What canst thou see in vs, O God, but vgly deformities, horrible sinnes, despicable miseries, yet doth it please thy mercy to say vnto vs, both, *Line*, and, *Follow me*?

The iust man is the first accuser of himselfe; whom doe wee heare to blazon the shame of *Matthew*, but his owne mouth? *Matthew* the Euangelist tels vs of *Matthew* the Publican: His fellowes call him *Leui*, as willing to lay their finger vpon the spot of his vnpleasing profession; himselfe will not smoothe, nor blanch it a whit, but publishes it to all the world in a thankfull recognition of the mercy that called him: as liking well that his basenesse should serue for a fit foile to set off the glorious lustre of his grace by whom he was elected: What matters it how vile we are, O God, so thy glory may arise in our abasement?

That word was enough, *Follow mee*; spoken by the same tongue, that said to the corps, at Nain, *Tong man I say to thee, Arise*: Hee that said, at first, *Let there bee light*, sayes now, *Follow mee*: That power sweetely inclines which could forcibly command: the force is not more vnresistible, then the inclination: when the Sunne shines vpon the Isicles, can they choose but melt, and fall? When it lookes into a dungeon, can the place choose but be enlightned? Doe wee see the Iet drawing vp strawes to it, the Load-stone iron, and doe wee maruell if the omnipotent Sauour, by the influence of his grace, attract the heart of a Publican? *Hee arose and followed him*. We are all naturally auerse from thee, O God; doe thou but bid vs, *Follow thee*; draw vs by thy powerfull word, and we shall runne after thee. Alas, thou speakest, and wee sit still: thou speakest by thine outward Word to our eare, and we stirre not, speake thou by the secret and effectuall word of thy spirit, to our heart: The world cannot hold vs downe, Satan cannot stop our way, we shall arise and follow thee.

It was not a more busie then gainefull trade that *Matthew* abandoned to follow Christ into pouertie, and now hee cast away his Counters, and stricke his Tallies, and crossed his bookes, and contemned his heapes of cash in comparison of that better treasure, which he fore-saw lye open in that happy attendance. If any commoditie bee valued of vs too deare to bee parted with, for Christ, wee are more fit to bee Publicans; then Disciples: Our Sauour inuites *Matthew* to a Discipleship; *Matthew* inuites him to a feast. The ioy of his call makes him beginne his abdication of the world, in a banquet.

Here was not a more cheerfull thankfulness in the inuiter, then a gracious humility in

in the guest: The new servant bids his Master, the Publican his Saviour, and is honoured with so blessed a presence. I doe not finde where Iesus was euer bidden to any table, and refused: If a Pharisee, if a Publican invited him, he made not dainty to goe: Not for the pleasure of the dishes, what was that to him who began his worke in a whole Lent of dayes? But (as it was his meate and drinke to doe the will of his Father) for the benefit of so winning a conuersation. If he sate with sinners, he conuerted them; If with conuerts, he confirmed and instructed them; If with the poore, hee fed them; If with the rich in substance, he made them richer in grace. At whose board did hee euer sit, and left not his host a gainer? The poore Bridegroome entertaines him, and hath his water-pots filled with Wine: *Simon* the Pharisee entertaines him, and hath his table honoured with the publique remission of a penitent sinner, with the heauenly doctrine of remission: *Zacheus* entertaines him, saluation came that day to his house, with the Author of it; that presence made the Publican a sonne of *Abraham*; *Matthew* is recompensed for his feast with an Apostleship: *Martha*, and *Mary* entertaine him, and besides diuine instruction receiue their brother from the dead: O Saviour, whether thou feast vs, or we feast thee, in both of them is blessednesse.

Where a Publican is the Feast-master, it is no maruell if the guests be Publicans, and sinners; whether they came alone out of the hope of that mercy, which they saw their fellow had found; or whether *Matthew* invited them to be partners of that plentiful grace, wherof hee had tasted, I inquire not: Publicans and sinners will flocke together; the one, hatefull for their trade, the other for their vicious life. Common contempt hath wrought them to an vnanimitie, and sends them to seeke mutuall comfort in that society, which all others held loathsome and contagious. Moderate correction humbleth, and shameth the offender: whereas a cruell seueritie makes men desperate; and driues them to those courses whereby they are more dangerously infected: How many haue gone into the prison faultie, and returned flagitious? If Publicans were not sinners, they were no whit beholden to their neighbours.

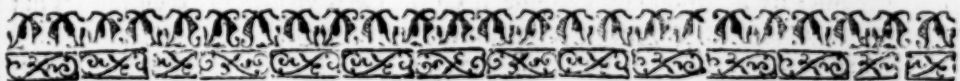
What a table full was here? The Sonne of God beset with Publicans, and sinners: O happy Publicans, and sinners, that had found our their Saviour: O mercifull Saviour, that disdained not Publicans and sinners.

What sinner can feare to kneele before thee, when he sees Publicans and sinners sit with thee? Who can feare to be despised of thy meekenesse and mercy, which didst not abhorre, to conuerse with the outcasts of men? Thou didst not despise the Thiefe confessing vpon the Crosse, nor the sinner weeping vpon thy seate, nor the Canaanite crying to thee in the way, nor the blushing adulteresse, nor the odious Publican, nor the forswearing Disciple, nor the persecutor of Disciples, nor thine owne executioners, how can wee bee vnwelcome to thee, if wee come with teares in our eyes, faith in our hearts, restitution in our hands? O Saviour, our breasts are too oft shut vpon thee, thy bosome is euer open to vs; wee are as great sinners as the consorts of these Publicans, why should wee despaire of a roome at thy Table?

The squint-eyd Pharisees looke a-crosse at all the actions of Christ; where they should haue admired his mercy, they cauilt at his holinesse; *They said to his Disciples; why eateth your Master with Publicans, and sinners?* They durst not say thus to the Master, whose answer (they knew) would soone haue conuincd them: This winde (they hoped) might shake the weake faith of the Disciples: They speake where they may bee most likely to hurt: All the crew of Satanicall instruments haue learnt this craft of their old Tutor in Paradise: We cannot reuerence that man, whom we thinke vnholly; Christ had lost the hearts of his followers, if they had entertained the least suspicion of his impurity; which the murmure of these enuious Pharisees would haue insinuated: *He cannot be worthy to be followed that is vncleane; He cannot but bee vn-
cleane that eateth with Publicans and sinners.* Proud and foolish Pharisees, ye fast whiles Christ eateth; ye fast in your houses, whiles Christ eateth in other mens; ye fast with your owne, whiles Christ feasts with sinners; but if ye fast in pride, whiles Christ eates

in humilitie: if ye fast at home, for merit, or popularitie, whiles Christ feasts with sinners for compassion, for edification, for conuersion, your fast is vncleane, his feast is holy, ye shall haue your portion with hypocrites, when those Publicans and sinners shall be glorious.

When these censurers thought the Disciples had offended, they speake not to them but to their Master, Why doethy Disciples that which is not lawfull? now, when they thought Christ offended, they speake not to him, but to the Disciples: Thus, like true make-bates they goe about to make a breach in the family of Christ, by setting off the one from the other: The quicke eye of our Sauour hath soone espied the packe of their fraud, and therefore hee takes the words out of the mouthes of his Disciples, into his owne: They had spoke of Christ to the Disciples; Christ answers for the Disciples concerning himselfe, *The whole neede not the Physitian but the sicke*. According to the two qualities of pride, scorne and oter-weening, these insolent Pharisees ouer-rated their owne holinesse, contemned the noted vnholinesse of others: As if themselues were not tainted with secret sinnes, as if others could not be cleansed by repentance; The searcher of hearts meets with their arrogance, and findes those iusticiaries sinnefull, those sinners iust: The spirituall Physitian findes the sicknesse of those sinners wholesome, the health of those Pharisees desperate: that, wholesome, because it calls for the helpe of the Physitian, this, desperate, because it needs not. Euery soule is sicke; those most that feele it not: Those that feele it, complaine; those that complaine, haue cure; those that feele it not, shall finde themselues dying ere they can wish to recouer. Oh blessed Physitian, by whose stripes we are haaled, by whose death we liue, happy are they that are vnder thy hands, sicke, as of sinne, so of sorrow for sinne; it is as vnpossible they should dye, as it is vnpossible for thee to want either skill, or power, or mercy: Sinne hath made vs sicke vnto death, make thou vs but as sicke of our sinnes, we are as safe, as thou art gracious.



*Christ among the Gergesens; or Legion, and the
Gadarene Herd.*



Do not any where finde so furious a Demoniacke, as amongst the Gergesens: Satan is most tyrannous, where he is obeyed most: Christ no looner sailed ouer the lake, then hee was met with two possessed Gadarenes: The extreme rage of the one hath drowned the mention of the other: Yet in the midst of all that cruelty of the euill spirit, there was sometimes a remission, if not an intermission, of vexation: If, oftentimes Satan caught him, then, sometimes, in the same violence, he caught him not. It was no thanks to that malignant one, who as hee was indefatigable in his executions, so vnmeasurable in his malice; but to the mercifull ouer-ruling of God, who in a gracious respect to the weaknesse of his poore creatures, limits the spightfull attempts of that immortall enemy; and takes off this Mastiue, whiles wee may take breath: He who in his iustice giues way to some onsets of Satan, in his mercy restraines them: so regarding our desertings, that withal he regards our strength: If way should be giuen to that malicious spirit, we could not subsist: no violent thing can endure; & if Satan might haue his will, we should no moment be free; He can be no more weary of doing euill to vs, then God is of doing good: Are wee therefore preserued from the malignitie of these powers of darknesse, *Blessed be our strong helper that hath not giuen vs ouer to be a prey vnto their teeth*: Or if some scope haue been giuen to that envious one, to afflict vs, hath it beene with fauourable limitations, it is thine onely mercy, O God, that hath chained and
muzzled

muzzled vp this band-dog, so as that he may scratch vs with his pawes, but cannot pierce vs with his fangs. Farre, farre is this from our deserts, who had too well merited a iust abdication from thy fauour, and protection, and an interminable seisure by Satan, both in soule and body.

Neither doe I here see more matter of thanks to our God, for our immunity from the externall iniuries of Satan, then occasion of serious inquirie into his power ouer vs, for the spirituall. I see some that thinke themselves safe from this ghostly tyranny, because they sometimes finde themselves in good moods, free from the suggestions of grosse sinnes, much more from the commission: Vaine men that feede themselves with so false and friuolous comforts; will they not see Satan, through the iust permission of God, the same to the soule, in mentall possessions, that he is to the body, in corporall? The worst demoniack hath his lightsome respites; not euer tortured, not euer furious, betwixt whiles hee might looke soberly, talke sensibly, moue regularly: It is a wofull comfort that wee sinne not alwayes: There is no Master so barbarous as to require of his Slaue a perpetuall vnintermitted toile, yet, though hee sometimes eate, sleepe, rest, hee is a vassall still: If that wicked one haue drawne vs to a custumarie perpetration of euill, and haue wrought vs to a frequent iteration of the same sinne, this is gage enough for our seruitude, matter enough for his tyranny, and insultation: He that would be our tormenter alwayes, cares onely to be sometimes our Tempter.

The possessed is bound, as with the inuisible fetters of Satan, so with the materiall chaines of the inhabitants; What can bodily force preuaile against a spirit? Yet they indeuour this restraint of the man, whether out of charity, or iustice: Charity, that he might not hurt himselfe; Iustice, that he might not hurt others: None doe so much befriend the Demoniacke as those that binde him: Neither may the spirituallly possessed be otherwise handled; for though this act of the enemie be plausible, and, to appearance, pleasant, yet there is more danger in this deare, and smiling tyranny: Two sorts of chaines are fit for outrageous sinners; Good lawes, vnpartiall executions; That they may not hurt, that they may not be hurt to eternall death.

These iron chaines are no sooner fast, then broken: There was more then an humane power in this disruption: It is not hard to conceiue the utmost of nature, in this kinde of actions: *Sampson* doth not breake the cords, and ropes, like a theed of rowe, but God by *Sampson*: The man doth not breake these chaines, but the spirit. How strong is the arme of these euill angels, how farre transcending the ordinarie course of nature? They are not called Powers for nothing; what flesh and blood could but tremble at the palpable inequality of this match, if herein the mercifull protection of our God did not the rather magnifie it selfe, that so much strength, met with so much malice, hath not preuailed against vs: In spight of both, we are in safe hands: Hee that so easily brake the iron fetters, can neuer breake the adamantine chaine of our faith: In vaine doe the chafing billowes of hell beate vpon that Rocke; wheron wee are built: And though these brittle chaines of earthly metall bee easily broken by him, yet the sure tempered chaine of Gods eternall Decree, hee can neuer breake, that almighty Arbitrer of Heauen, and Earth, and Hell, hath chained him vp in the bottomlesse pit, and hath so restrained his malice, that (but, for our good) wee cannot be tempted; wee cannot bee foyled, but for a glorious victory.

Alas, it is no otherwise with the spirituallly possessed: The chaines of restraint are commonly broken by the fury of wickednesse: What are the respects of ciuilitie, feare of God, feare of men, wholesome lawes, carefull executions to the desperately licentious, but as cobwebs to an harner? Let these wilde Demoniacks know, that GOD hath prouided chaines for them, that will hold, euen *euerslasting chaines vnder darknesse*; these are such as must hold the Devils themselves (their masters) vnto the iudgement of the great Day, how much more those impotent vassals? Oh that men would suffer themselves to be bound to their good behauiour, by the sweet, and easie recog-

recognizances of their dutie to their God, and the care of their owne soules, that so they might rather be bound vp in the bundle of life.

It was not for rest, that these chaines were torne off, but for more morion: This prisoner runnes away from his friends, hee cannot runne away from his Iaylor: Hee is now carryed into the Wildernesse; Not by meere externall force, but by internall impulsion; Caried by the same power that vnbound him, for the opportunitie of his Tyranny, for the horreur of the place, for the affamishment of his body, for the auoydince of all meanes of resistance. Solitary Desarts are the delights of Satan; It is an vnwise zeale that moues vs to doe that to our selues, in an opinion of merit and holinesse, which the Deuill wishes to doe to vs for a punishment, and conueniencie of tentation. The euill Spirit is for solitarinesse; God is for societie: *Hee dwels in the assembly of his Saints, yea, there he hath a delight to dwell*: Why should not wee account it our happinesse that we may haue leaue to dwell, where the author of all happinesse loues to dwell?

There cannot be any misery incident into vs, whereof our gracious Redeemer is not both conscious, and sensible; without any intreary therefore of the miserable Demoniack, or suit of any friend; the God of spirits takes pitie of his distresse; and from no motion but his owne, commands the euill Spirit to come out of the man: O admirable president of mercy, preuenting our requests, exceeding our thoughts, forcing fauours vpon our impotence; doing that for vs, which we should, and yet cannot desire. If men vpon our instant sollicitations would giue vs their best ayde, it were a iust praise of their bounty: but it well became thee, O God of mercy, to goe without force, to giue without suit: And doe we thinke thy goodnesse is impayred by thy glory? If thou wert thus commiseratiue vpon earth, art thou lesse in heauen? How dost thou now take notice of all our complaints, of all our infirmities? How dorth thine infinite pittie take order to redresse them? What euill can befall vs, which thou knowest not, feelest not, releuest not? How safe are wee that haue such a Guardian, such a Mediator in heauen?

Not long before, had our Sauour commanded the windes, and waters, and they could not but obey him: now, he speaks in the same language to the euill Spirit; he intreats not, he perswades not, hee commands. Command argues superioritie; Hee onely is infinitely stronger then the strong one in possession: Else, where powers are mitcht, though with some inequality, they tugge for the victory; and without a resistance yeeld nothing. There are no fewer sorts of dealing with Satan, then with men: Some haue dealt with him by suit, as the old Sarian hereticks, and the present Indian Sauages, sacrificing to him, that hee hurt not: Others by couenant, conditioning their seruice vpon his assistance, as Witches and Magicians: Others, by insinuation of implicite compact, as Charmers, and Figure-casters: Others by adiuration, as the sonnes of *Scena*, and moderne Exorcists, vnwarrantably charging him by an higher name then their owne: None euer offered to deale with Satan by a direct and primary command, but the God of spirits; the great Archangell, when the strife was about the body of *Moses*, commanded not, but imprecated rather, *The Lord rebuke thee, Satan*: It is onely the God that made this Spirit an Angell of light, that can command him, now that hee hath made himselfe the Prince of darknesse. If any created power dare to vsurpe a word of command, he laughs at their presumption; and knows them his vassalls, whom hee dissembles to feare as his Lords. It is thou onely, O Sauour, at whose becke those stubborne Principalities of hell yeeld, and tremble: no wicked man can be so much a slave to Satan, as Satan is to thee; the interposition of thy grace may defeat that dominion of Satan: thy rule is absolute, and capable of no lett. What need wee to feare, whiles we are vnder so omnipotent a Commander? The waves of the deepe rage horribly, yet the Lord is stronger then they: Let those Principalities and Powers doe their worst: Those mighty aduersaries are vnder the command of him, who loued vs so well as to bleed for vs: What can wee now doubt of? His power, or his will? How can wee professe him a God, and doubt

of his power? How can wee professe him a Saviour, and doubt of his will? Hee, both, can, and will command those infernall powers: we are no lesse safe, then they are malicious.

The Deuill saw Iesus by the eyes of the Demoniack; For the same saw, that spake; but it was the ill spirit, that said, *I beseech thee torment mee not*: It was fore against his will that hee saw so dreadfull an object: The ouer-ruling power of Christ dragged the foule spirit into his presence. Guiltinesse would faine keepe out of sight: The limmes of so wofull an head shall once call on the Hills, and Rocks to hide them from the face of the Lambe; such Lyon-like terrour is in that milde face, when it looks vpon wickednesse: Neither shall it bee one day the least part of the torment of the damned, to see the most louely spectacle that heauen can afford: Hee from whom they fled in his offers of grace, shall be so much more terrible, as hee was, and is more gracious: I maruell not therefore that the Deuill, when hee saw Iesus, cryed out; I could maruell that hee fell downe, that hee worshipped him: That which the proud spirit would haue had Christ to haue done to him, in his great Duell, the same he now doth vnto Christ, feartfully, seruilely, forcedly: Who shall henceforth bragge of the externall homage hee performes to the Sonne of God, when hee sees Satan himselfe fall downe and worship? What comfort can there be in that, which is common to vs with Deuils; who as they beleue, and tremble, so they tremble, and worship? The outward bowings is the body of the action, the disposition of the soule is the soule of it; therein lyes the difference from the counterfeite stoopings of wicked men, and spirits: The religious heart *serues the Lord in feare, and reioyes in him with trembling*. What it doth is in way of seruice; In seruice to his Lord, whose soueraigntie is his comfort and protection; In the feare of a son, not of a slaue; In feare tempered with ioy; In a ioy but allayed with trembling; whereas the prostration of wicked men, and deuils, is onely an act of forme, or of force; as to their Iudge, as to their tormentor, not as to their Lord; in meere seruilitie, not in reuerence, in an vncomfortable dullnesse, without all delight: in a perfect horror, without capacitie of ioy: These worship without thanks, because they fall downe without the true affections of worship.

Who so maruels to see the Deuill vpon his knees, would much more maruell to heare what came from his mouth, *Iesu the sonne of the most high God*; A confession, which if we should heare without the name of the Author, we should aske, from what Saint it came. Behold the same name given to Christ by the Deuill, which was formerly given him by the Angell, *Thou shalt call his name Iesus*; That awfull name, wherewith euery knee shall bow, in heauen, in earth, and vnder the earth, is called vpon, by this prostrate Deuill: and least that should not import enough, (since others haue bene honoured by this name in Type,) he addes for full distinction, *The Sonne of the most High God*: The good Syrophenean, and blind Bartemew could say, *The Sonne of David*: It was well to acknowledge the true descent of his pedigree, according to the flesh: but this internall spirit lookes aloft, and fetcheth his line out of the highest heauens. *The Sonne of the most high God*: The famous confession of the prime Apostle (which honoured him with a new name to immortallitie,) was no other then, *Thou art the Christ, the Sonne of the liuing God*; and what other doe I heare from the lips of a fiend? None more diuine words could fall from the highest Saint: Nothing hinders but that the veriest miscreant on earth, yea the foulest Deuill in Hell may speake holily: It is no passing of iudgement vpon loose sentences: So Peter should haue been cast for a Satan, in denying, forswearing, cursing; and the Deuill should haue bene set vp for a Saint, in confessing, *Iesu the Sonne of the most high God*: Fond hypocrite, that pleasest thy selfe, in talking well, heare this Deuil; and when thou canst speake better then he, looke to fare better; but in the meane time know, that a smooth tongue, and a foule heart, caries away double iudgements.

Let curious heads dispute, whether the Deuill knew Christ to bee God: In this I dare beleue himselfe, though in nothing else, he knew what hee beleued, what hee beleued

beleueed what he confessed, *Iesus the Sonne of the most high God*. To the confusion of those Iemi-Christians, that haue either held doubtfully, or ignorantly mis-knowne, or blasphemously denied what the very Deuils haue professed. How little can a bare speculation auail vs in these cases of Diuinity? So farre this Denill hath attained, to no ease, no comfort. Knowledge alone doth but puffe vp; it is our loue that edifies: If there be not a sense of our sure interest in this Iesus, a power to apply his merits, and obedience, we are no whit the safer, no whit the better; onely wee are so much the wiser, to vnderstand who shall condemne vs.

This piece of the clause was spoken like a Saint, *Iesus the Sonne of the most high God*: the other piece like a Deuill, *What haue I to doe with thee?* If the disclamation were vniuersall, the latter words would impugne the former: for whiles hee confesses Iesus to be the Sonne of the most high God, he withall confesses his owne ineuitable subiection. Wherefore would he beseech, if he were not obnoxious? He cannot, he dare not say, *What hast thou to doe with me?* but, *What haue I to doe with thee?* Others indeed I haue vexed, thee I feare, in respect then of any violence, of any personall prouocation, *What haue I to doe with thee?* And dost thou aske, O thou euill spirit, what hast thou to doe with Christ, whiles thou vexest a seruant of Christ? Hast thou thy name from knowledge, and yet so mistakest him whom thou confessest, as if nothing could be done to him, but what immediately concernes his owne person? Heare that great, and iust Iudge sentencing vpon his dreadfull Tribunall: *In as much as thou didst it vnto one of these little ones, thou didst it vnto me*: It is an idle misprision to seuer the sense of an iniury done to any of the members, from the head.

He that had humility enough to kneele to the Son of God, hath boldnesse enough to expostulate, *Art thou come to torment vs before our time?* Whether it were, that Satan, who vseth to enioy the torment of sinners, whose musicke it is to heare our shrieks, and gnashings, held it no small piece of his torment, to be restrained in the exercise of his tyrannie: Or, whether the very presence of Christ were his racke: For, the guilty spirit, proiecteth terrible things, and cannot behold the Iudge, or the executioner without a renouation of horror: Or, whether that (as himselfe professeth) he were now in a fearfull expectation of being commanded downe into the deepe, for a further degree of actuall torment, which he thus deprecates.

There are tortures appointed to the very spirituall natures of euill Angels: Men that are led by sense, haue easily granted the body subiect to torment, who yet, haue not so readily conceiued this incident to a spiritpall substance: The holy Ghost hath not thought it fit to acquaint vs with the particular manner of these inuisible acts, rather willing that wee should herein feare, then enquire; but as all matters of faith, though they cannot be proved by reason (for that they are in a higher sphere) yet afford an answer able to stop the mouth of all reason, that dares barke against them, (since truth cannot be opposite to it selfe) so, this of the sufferings of spirits: There is therefore both an intentionall torment incident to spirits, and a reall: For, as in blessednesse the good spirits find themselves ioyned vnto the chiefe good; and hereupon feele a perfect loue of God, and vnspeakable ioy in him, and rest in themselves, so contrarily, the euill spirits perceiue themselves eternally excluded from the presence of God, and see themselves settled in a wofull darknesse; and from the sense of this separation arises an horror not to be expressed, not to be conceiued: How many men haue we knowne to torment themselves with their owne thoughts? There needs no other gibbet then that, which their troubled spirit hath erected in their owne heart: and if some paines begin at the body, and from thence afflict the soule in a copartnership of griefe, yet others arise immediately from the soule, and draw the body into a participation of misery: Why may wee not therefore conceiue meete and separate spirits capable of such an inward excruciation?

Besides which, I heare the Iudge of men and Angels say, *Goe ye cursed into euerlasting fire, prepared for the Denill, and his Angels*, I heare the Prophet say, *Tophet is prepared of old*; If with feare, and without curiositie wee may looke vpon

those flames: Why may we not attribute a spirituall nature to that more then naturall fire? In the end of the world, the elements shall be dissolued by fire: and if the pure quintessentiall matter of the skie, and the element of fire it selfe, shall be dissolued by fire, then that last fire shall be of another nature, then that which it consumeth: what hinders then but that the omnipotent God hath from eternitie created a fire of another nature proportionable euen to spirituall essences? Or why may wee not distinguish of fire, as it is it selfe, a bodily creature, and, as it is an instrument of Gods iustice, so working, not by any materiall vertue, or power of it owne, but by a certain height of supernaturall efficacie, to which it is exalted by the omnipotence of that supreme and righteous Iudge? Or lastly, why may wee not conceiue that though spirits haue nothing materiall in their nature, which that fire should worke vpon, yet by the iudgement of the almightie Arbiter of the world, iustly willing their torment, they may be made most sensible of paine, and, by the obedible submission of their created nature, wrought vpon immediately by their appointed tortures: Besides, the very horrour, which ariseth from the place, whereto they are euerlastingly confined: For if the incorporeall spirits of living men may bee held in a lothed or painfull body, and conceiue sorrow to bee so imprisoned: Why may wee not as easily yeeld that the euill spirits of Angels, or men, may be held in those direfull flames, and much more abhorre therein to continue for euer? Tremble rather, O my soule, at the thought of this wofull condition of the euill Angels; who, for one onely act of Apostasie from God, are thus perpetually tormented, whereas we sinfull wretches multiply many, and presumptuous offences against the Maiestie of our God: And withall admire, and magnifie that infinite mercy to the miserable generation of man; which, after this holy seueritie of iustice to the reuolted Angels, so graciously forbears our hainous iniquities, and both suffers vs to be free for the time, from these hellish torments, and giues vs opportunitie of a perfect free dome from them for euer: *Praise the Lord, O my soule, and all that is within me, praise his holy Name, who forgiveth all thy sinnes, and healeth all thine infirmities: Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and compassions.*

There is no time wherein the euill spirits are not tormented: there is a time wherein they expect to be tormented yet more: *Art thou come to torment vs before our time?* They knew that the last Assies are the prefixed terme of their full execution; which they also vnderstood to be not yet come: For though they knew not when the Day of Iudgement should be; (a point concealed from the glorious Angels of heauen) yet they knew when it should not be; and therefore they say, *Before the time.* Euen the very euill spirits confesse, and fearfully attend, a set day of vniuersall Sessions; They beleue lesse then Devils, that either doubt of, or deny that day of finall retribution.

Oh the wonderfull mercy of our God, that both to wicked men, and spirits, repites the vtmost of their torment: He might vpon the first instant of the fall of Angels, haue inflicted on them the highest extremitie of his vengeance: Hee might vpon the first finnes of our youth (yea of our nature) haue swept vs away, and giuen vs our portion in that fierie lake; he stayes a time for both: Though, with this difference of mercy to vs men, that here, not onely is a delay, but, may be, an viter preuention of punishment, which to the euill spirits is altogether impossible; They doe suffer, they must suffer; and though they haue now deserued to suffer all they must, yet they must once suffer more then they doe.

Yet to doo this euill spirit expostulate, that he saies, *I beseech thee torment mee not.* The world is well changed, since Satans first onlet vpon Christ: Then, he could say, *If thou be the Sonne of God, now, Iesus, the Sonne of the most high God; then, All these will I giue thee if thou wilt fall downe, and worship me;* now, *I beseech thee torment mee not.* The same power, when hee lists, can change the note of the Tempter, to vs; How happy are wee that haue such a Redeemer as can command the Devils to their chains? Oh consider this ye lawlesse sinners, that haue said, *Let vs breake his*

his bonds, and cast his cords from vs: How euer the Almighty suffers you, for a iudgement to haue fre scope to euill, and ye can now impotently resist the reuealed will of your Creator, yet the time shall come, when yee shall see the very masters, whom ye haue serued, (the powers of darknesse) vnable to auoid the reuenges of God; How much lesse shall man strue with his Maker; man, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose house is clay, whose foundation is the dust?

Nature teaches euery creature to with a freedome from paine: the foulest spirits cannot but loue themselves, and this loue must needs produce a deprecation of euill: Yet, what a thing is this, to heare the deuill at his prayers: *I beseech thee torment me not*: Deuotion is not guilty of this, but feare: There is no grace in the suit of Devils, but nature, no respect of glory to their Creator, but their owne ease; They cannot pray against sinne, but against torment for sinne. What newes is it now, to heare the profane mouth, in extremitie, imploring the Sacred Name of God, when the Devils doe so? The worst of all creatures hates punishment, and can say, *Lead me not into paine*, onely the good heart can say, *Lead mee not into temptation*: If wee can as heartily pray against sinne, for the auoiding of displeasure, as against punishment, when wee haue displeased, there is true grace in the soule: Indeed, if wee could seruently pray against sinne, we should not need to pray against punishment, which is no other then the inseparable shadow of that bodie; but if we haue not laboured against our sins, in vaine doe wee pray against punishment; God must be iust; and the wages of sinne is death.

It pleased our holy Sauour, not onely to let fall words of command vpon this spirit, but to interchange some speeches with him: All Christs actions are not for example: It was the error of our Grand-mother to hold chat with Satan: That God, who knowes the craft of that old Serpent, and our weake simplicitie, hath charged vs not to enquire of an euill spirit: surely, if the Disciples returning to *Jacobs Well*, wondered to see Christ talke with a woman, well may wee wonder to see him talking with an vncleane Spirit: Let it be no presumption, O Sauour, to aske vpon what grounds thou didst this, wherein wee may not follow thee: Wee know, that sinne was excepted in thy conformitie of thy selfe to vs; wee know there was no guile found in thy mouth, no possibilitie of taint in thy nature, in thine actions: Neither is it hard to conceiue how the same thing may bee done by thee without sinne, which wee cannot but sinne in doing. There is a vast difference in the intention, in the Agent; For, on the one side, thou didst not aske the name of the spirit, as one that knew not, and would learne by inquiring; but, that by the confession of that mischiefe, which thou pleasedst to suffer, the grace of the cure might bee the more conspicuous, the more glorious; so, on the other, God and man might doe that safely, which meere man cannot doe, without danger; thou mightest touch the leprosie, and not be legally vncleane, because thou touchedst it to heale it, didst not touch it with possibility of infection; So mightest thou, who by reason of the perfection of thy diuine nature, wert vncapable of any staine, by the interlocution with Satan, safely conferre with him, whom corrupt man, pre-disposed to the danger of such a parle, may not meddle with, without sinne, because not without perill: It is for none but God to hold discourse with Satan: Our surest way is to haue as little to doe with that euill one, as wee may; and if hee shall offer to maintaine conference with vs by his secret tentations, to turne our speech vnto our God, with the Archangell, *The Lord rebuke thee Satan*.

It was the presupposition of him that knew it, that not only men but spirits haue names: This then he askes, not out of an ignorance, or curiositie; nothing could bee hid from him who calleth the starres, and all the hosts of heaven by their names; but, out of a iust respect to the glory of the miracle hee was working, whereto the notice of the name would not a little auaille: For, if without inquirie, or confession, our Sauour had eieced this euill spirit, it had passed for the single dispossession of one onely Deuill, whereas now, it appears there was a combination and bellish

champertie in these powers of darknesse, which were all forced to vaile vnto that almighty command.

Before, the Deuill had spoken singularly of himselfe, *What haue I to doe with thee;* and, *I beseech thee torment me not:* Our Sauour yet, knowing that there was a multitude of Devils lurking in that brest, who dissembled their presence, wersts it out of the Spirit by this interrogation, *What is thy name?* Now can those wicked ones no longer hide themselves: He that asked the question, forced the answer, *My name is Legion.* The author of discord hath borrowed a name of warre; from that military order of discipline (by which the Iewes were subdued) doth the Deuill fetch his denomination: They were many, yet they say, *My name*, not, *Our name*; though many, they speake as one, they act as one, in this possession: There is a marvellous accordance even betwixt euill spirits; that Kingdome is not dioided, for then it could not stand; I wonder not that wicked men doe so conspire in euill, that there is such vnanimie in the broachers, and abettors of errors, when I see those Devils, which are many in substance, are one in name, action, habitation: Who can bragge too much of vnitie, when it is incident into wicked spirits? All the praise of concord is in the subiect; if that be holy, the consent is Angelicall, if sinfull, deuillish.

What a fearefull aduantage haue our spirituall enemies against vs? If armed troopes come against single straglers, what hope is there of life, of victory? How much doth it concerne vs to band our hearts together, in a communion of Saints? Our enemies come vpon vs like a torrent: Oh let not vs runne asunder like drops in the dust: All our vnited forces will bee little enough, to make head against this league of destruction.

Legion imports Order, number, conflict. Order, in that there is a distinction of regiment, a subordination of Officers: Though in hell there be confusion of faces, yet not confusion of degrees; Number, Those that haue reckoned a Legion at the lowest, haue counted it six thousand: others, haue more then doubled it, though here it is not strict, but figuratiue, yet the letter of it implyes multitude: How fearefull is the consideration of the number of Apostate Angels? And if a Legion can attend one man, how many must we needs thinke are they, who, all the world ouer, are at hand, to the punishment of the wicked, the exercise of the good, the tentation of both? It cannot be hoped there can be any place, or time, wherein we may be secure from the onsets of these enemies: Be sure, ye lewd men, ye shall want no furtherance to euill, no torment for euill: Be sure, ye godly, ye shall not want combatants to try your strength, and skill: Awaken your courages to resist, and stirre vp your hearts, make sure the meanes of your safety: There are more with vs then against vs: The God of heauen is with vs, if we be with him: and our Angels behold the face of God: If every deuill were a Legion, wee are safe: Though we walke through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall feare no euill: Thou, O Lord, shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of our enemies, and thy right hand shall saue vs.

Conflict: All this number is not for sight, for rest; but for motion, for action; Neither was there euer houre, since the first blow giuen to our first Parents, wherein there was so much as a truce betwixt these aduersaries. As therefore strong frontier Townes, when there is a peace concluded on both parts, breake vp their garison, open their gates, neglect their Bulwarkes: but when they heare of the enemy mustering his forces, in great and vnequall numbers, then they double their guard; keepe Sentinell, repaire their Sconces; so must we, vpon the certaine knowledge of our numerous, and deadly enemies, in continuall aray against vs, addresse our selves alwayes to a wary and strong resistance. I doe not obserue the most to thinke of this ghostly hostilitie, Either they doe not find therein tentations, or those tentations hurtfull; they see no worse then themselves: and if they feele motions of euill, arising in them, they impute it to fancy, or vnrasonable appetite, to no power, but natures; and, those motions they follow, without sensible hurt; neither see they what harme it is to follow: Is it any marvell that small eyes cannot discern spirituall obiects? That the world

world who is the friend, the vassall of Satan, is in no warre with him? *Elisba's* servant, when his eyes were opened, saw troops of spirituall souldiers, which before hee discerned not: If the eyes of our soules be once enlightened by supernaturall knowledge, and the cleare beames of faith, wee shall as plainly descry the inuisible powers of wickednesse, as now our bodily eyes see heaven, and earth. They are, though we see them not, we cannot be safe from them, if we doe not acknowledge, not oppose them.

The Devils are now become great sutors to Christ: That hee would not command them into the deepe; that hee would permit their entrance into the swine. What is this deepe but hell? both for the vtter separation from the face of God; and for the impossibility of passage to the region of rest and glory? The very euill spirits, then, feare, and expect a further degree of torment; they know themselves reserved in those chaines of darknesse for the iudgement of the great day: There is the same wages due to their sinnes, and to ours; neither are the wages paid till the worke bee done; they, tempting men to sinne, must needes sinne grieuiously in tempting, as with vs men those that mislead into sinne, offend more then the actors; not till the vpshot therefore of their wickednesse shall they receive the full measure of their condemnation: This day, this deepe they tremble at: what shall I say of those men that feare it not? It is hard for men to beleue their owne vnbelieve: If they were perswaded of this fiery dungeon, this bottomlesse deepe, wherein euery sinne shall receive an horrible portion with the damned, durst they stretch forth their hands to wickednesse? No man will put his hand into a fiery crucible to fetch gold thence, because hee knowes it will burne him: Did wee as truly beleue the euerlasting burning of that infernall fire, we durst not offer to fetch pleasures, or profits, out of the midst of those flames.

This degree of torment they grant in Christs power to command, they knew his power vnresistible, had hee therefore but said, *Backe to hell whence yee came*, they could no more haue staid vpon earth, then they can now climbe into heaven. O the wonderfull dispensation of the Almighty, who though hee could command all the euill spirits downe to their dungeons in an instant; so as they should haue no more opportunity of temptation, yet thinkes fit to retaine them vpon earth: It is not out of weaknesse, or improvidence of that diuine hand, that wicked spirits tyrannize here vpon earth, but out of the most wise, and most holy ordination of God, who knowes how to turne euill into good; how to fetch good out of euill, and by the worst instruments to bring about his most iust decrees: Oh that wee could adore that awfull, and infinite power, and cheerefully cast ourselues vpon that providence, which keepes the Keyes euen of hell it selfe, and either lets out, or returns the Devils to their places.

Their other suit hath some maruell in mouing it, more in the grant; *That they might bee suffered to enter into the Herd of Swine*. It was their ambition of some mischiefe, that brought forth this desire: that since they might not vex the body of man, they might yet afflict men in their goods: The malice of these enuious spirits reacheth from vs, to ours: It is sore against their wills, if wee be not euery way miserable: if the Swine were legally vncleane for the vse of the table, yet they were naturally good: Had not Satan knowne them vsefull for man, he had neuer desired their ruine: But as Fencers will seeme to fetch a blow at the legge, when they intend it at the head, so doth this Deuill; whiles he driues at the Swine, hee aimes at the soules of these Gadarens: by this meanes, he hoped well (and his hope was not vaine) to worke in these Gergesens a discontentment at Christ, an vnwillingnesse to entertaine him, a desire of his absence; hee meant to turne them into Swine, by the losse of their Swine: It was not the rafters, or stones of the house of *Iob's* children, that he bore the grudge to, but to the owners; nor to the liues of the children so much, as the soule of their father: There is no affliction wherein he doth not strike at the heart; which, whiles it holds free, all other dammages are light; but a wounded spirit (whether with sinne

or sorrow) who can beare? What euer becomes of goods, or limmes, happy are we if (like wise souldiers) we guard the vital parts; whiles the soule is kept sound from impatience, from distrust, our enemy may afflicke vs, he cannot hurt vs.

They sue for a sufferance; not daring other then to grant, that without the permission of Christ, they could not hurt a very swine: If it be fearefull to thinke how great things euill spirits can doe with permission: it is comfortable to thinke how nothing they can doe without permission: Wee know they want not malice to destroy the whole frame of Gods worke; but of all man; of all men, Christians: but if without leaue they cannot set vpon an hogge, what can they doe to the liuing Images of their Creator? They cannot offer vs so much as a suggestion, without the permission of our Sauour: And can he that would giue his owne most precious blood for vs, to saue vs from euill, wilfully giue vs ouer to euill?

It is no newes that wicked spirits wish to doe mischiefe, it is newes that they are allowed it: if the owner of all things should stand vpon his absolute command, who can challenge him for what hee thinks fit to doe with his creature? The first Fole of the Asse is commanded, vnder the law, to haue his necke broken, what is that to vs? The creatures doe that they were made for, if they may serue any way to the glory of their Maker: But, seldome euer doth GOD leaue his actions vnfurnished with such reasons, as our weaknesse may reach vnto. There were sects amongst these Iewes that denied spirits, they could not bee more evidently, more powerfully conuincd then by this euent: Now shall the Gadarens see from what a multitude of deuils they were deliuered; and how easie it had beene for the same power to haue allowed these spirits to seize vpon their persons, as well as their Swine: Neither did GOD this without a iust purpose of their castigation: His iudgements are righteous, where they are most secret; Though we cannot accuse these inhabitants of ought, yet hee could; and thought good thus to mulct them: And if they had not wanted grace to acknowledge it, it was no small fauour of GOD, that hee would punish them in their Swine, for that, which hee might haue auenged vpon their bodies, and soules: Our goods are furthest off vs: It but in these wee smart, wee must confesse to finde mercy.

Sometimes it pleaseth GOD to grant the suits of wicked men, and spirits, in no fauour to the suitors: He grants an ill suit, and withholds a good: He grants an ill suit in iudgement, and holds backe a good one, in mercy: The Israelites aske meate; hee giues Quailles to their mouthes, and leanness to their soules: The chosen vessell wishes Satan taken off, and heares onely, *My grace is sufficient for thee*: Wee may not euermore measure fauour by condescent: These Deuills doubtlesse receive more punishment for that harmefull act, wherein they are heard. If wee aske what is either vnfit to receiue, or vnlawfull to begge, it is a great fauour of our GOD to be denied.

Those spirits which would goe into the Swine by permission, goe out of the man by command; they had stayed long, and are eiecked suddenly: The immediate works of GOD are perfect in an instant, and doe not require the ayde of time for their maturation.

No sooner are they cast out of the man, then they are in the Swine: They will leese no time, but passe without intermission from one mischiefe to another: If they hold it a paine not to be doing of euill, Why is it not our delight to bee euer doing good? The impetuoufnesse was no lesse then the speede, *The Herd was caried with violence from a steepe-downe place into the lake, and was choaked*. It is no small force that could doe this; but if the Swine had beene so many mountaines, these spirits, vpon GODS permission, had thus transported them: How easily can they carie those soules (which are vnder their power,) to destruction? Vncleane beafts that wallow in the mire of sensualitie, brutish drunkards, transforming themselves by excessse, euen they are the Swine, whom the Legion caries headlong to the pit of perdition.

The

The wicked spirits haue their wish; The Swine are choked in the waues; What ease is this to them? Good God; that there should bee any creature that seekes contentment in destroying, in tormenting the good creatures of their Maker! This is the diet of hell: Those fiends feed vpon spight, towards man, so much more, as he doth more resemble his Creator: Towards all other liuing substances, so much more as they may be more vsefull to man.

The Swine ran downe violently, what maruell is it if their Keepers fled; that miraculous worke which should haue drawne them to Christ, driues them from him: They run with the newes: the country comes in with clamour: *The whole multitude of the country about, besought him to depart*: The multitude is a beast of many-heads; every head hath a seuerall mouth, and every mouth with a seuerall tongue, and every tongue a seuerall accent: Every head hath a seuerall braine, and every braine thoughts of their owne; so as it is hard to find a multitude, without some diuision: At least seldome euer hath a good motion found a perfect accordance; it is not so infrequent for a multitude to conspire in euill: Generalitie of assent is no warrant for any act: Common error carries away many, who inquire not into the reason of ought, but the practise: The way to hell is a beaten road through the many feet that tread it; when vice grows into fashion, singularity is a vertue.

There was not a Gadarene found, that either dehorted their fellowes, or opposed the motion: it is a signe of people giuen vp to iudgment, when no man makes head against projects of euill. Alas, what can one strong man doe against a whole throng of wickednesse? Yet this good comes of an vnpreuailing resistance, that God forbears to plague, where he finds but a sprinkling of faith: happy are they, who (like vnto the celestially bodies, which being caried about, with the sway of the highest sphere, yet creepe on their owne wayes) keepe on the courses of their owne holinesse, against the swinge of common corruptions: They shall both deliuer their owne soules, and helpe to withhold iudgement from others.

The Gadarenes sue to Christ for his departure: It is too much fauour to attribute this to their modesty, as if they held themselves vnworthy of so diuine a guest: Why then did they fall vpon this suit in a time of their losse? Why did they not taxe themselves, and intimate a secret desire of that, which they durst not begge? It is too much rigour to attribute it to the loue of their hogges, and an anger at their losse: then, they had not intreated, but expelled him; It was their feare that moued this harsh suit: A seruile feare of danger to their persons, to their goods: Lest he that could so absolutely command the Devils, should haue set these tormentors vpon them: Lest their other Demoniacks should bee dispossessed with like losse. I cannot blame these Gadarenes that they feared: This power was worthy of trembling at; Their feare was vniust; They should haue argued, *This man hath power ouer men, beasts, deuils, it is good hauing him to our friend; his presence is our safety and protection*: Now they contrarily mis-inferre, *Thus powerfull is he, it is good he were further off*; What miserable and pernicious misconstructions doe men make of God, of diuine attributes, and actions? God is omnipotent, able to take infinite vengeance of sinne, Oh that he were not; He is prouident, I may bee carelesse; Hee is mercifull, I may sinne; Hee is holy, Let him depart from me, for I am a sinfull man: How witty sophisters are naturall men to deceive their owne soules, to rob themselves of a God? Oh Sauour, how worthy are they to want thee, that wish to be rid of thee? Thou hast iust cause to bee weary of vs, euen whiles we sue to hold thee: but when once our wretched vnthankfulness grows

weary of thee, who can pitie vs to bee punished with thy departure?

Who can say it is other then righteous, that thou shouldest

regeft one day vpon vs, *Depart from me
ye wicked.*

FINIS.